DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 749 IR 021 171

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Ashby, Nicole, Ed. |
| TITLE | Community Update, 2001. |
| INSTITUTION | Department of Education, Washington, DC. Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs. |
| PUB DATE | 2001-00-00 |
| NOTE | 84p.; Special issue no. 90, "Back to School, Moving Forward," is not available from ERIC. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Tel: 877-433-7827 (Toll Free). For full text: http://www.ed.gov/. |
| PUB TYPE | Collected Works - Serials (022) |
| JOURNAL CIT | Community Update; n83-93 Jan-Dec 2001 |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC04 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Community Involvement; Current Events; *Education; Educational Development; Educational Finance; Educational Planning; Educational Practices; Educational Technology; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Involvement; Federal Aid; Government School Relationship; *Newsletters; Partnerships in Education; *School Community Relationship |
| IDENTIFIERS | Partnership for Family Involvement in Education |

ABSTRACT

This document consists of 10 issues (covering January through December 2000) of the newsletter, "Community Update," which features articles on community and family involvement in education. In addition to the articles, each issue (except the Special Issue) includes a preview of the month's Satellite Town Meeting; events and information discussed in the section, "Partnership for Family Involvement in Education" (a coalition of business, community, religious, and education organizations nationwide); a short article under the section, "About Our Partners"; calendar of upcoming events; and announcements. Each issue has a theme, as follows: Arts Education (January 2001); Special Issue: Fiscal Year 2001 Budget (January 2001); Safe Schools (February/March 2001); Early Reading (April 2001); Learning with Technology (May 2001); Standards and Accountability (June/July 2001); Faith-Based and Community Partnerships (August 2001); Families Involved in Learning (September 2001); and Character Education (October 2001). Cover article topics include: Secretary of Education, Richard Riley offers an optimistic outlook on the future of education; Secretary Riley calls the 18% increase in education funding a "landmark"; a Secret Service study explores early detection in school shootings and reports a declining rate of school violence; President George W. Bush issues his blueprint for improving American education called "No Child Left Behind"; the Department of Education receives the largest increase of any domestic agency in the President's budget request; testing as a tool for closing the achievement gap; an interview with Christine Brooks, Director of Education's Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Center; and nearly $7 million is awarded to New York state to support vocational rehabilitation and school reconstruction following the terrorist attacks. (AEF)

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# Community Update, 2001.

**Nicole Ashby, Editor**

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U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 83 | UPDATE | January 2001

*"Once you engage the kids, the rest will come."*

*Michael Greene, presidents, the Grammy® Foundation*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

## Secretary Champions "Partnership, Not Partisanship"

*Speech Points Out a Consensus for Education in Light of Elections*

In the final major speech of his tenure as Secretary of Education, Richard Riley offered an optimistic outlook on the future of education.

Following the November elections, Riley said, "We have reached a new consensus around education in this nation for improving it and making it a national priority, even as we respect that it is a state responsibility and a local function."

He said the votes that passed state measures for greater investments in education are a clear reflection of the country's support for public schools, which serve 90 percent of America's children.

"There is a growing consensus about the effectiveness of higher standards, reasonable assessments, parent involvement, well-trained teachers, and a quality learning environment," he added. "This consensus is built on partnership, not partisanship."

The Secretary celebrated improvements made in education in the last eight years, including the creation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center initiative, which funds after-school programs for more than 800,000 children, and has garnered thousands of local and national partnerships.

"Students' minds don't close down at 3—and neither should their schools," he said. "And it's through these strong local partnerships that we are keeping schools open and giving children better opportunities to succeed."

The November 16 address also marked American Education Week and International Education Week. "Sometimes people forget that an emphasis on international education helps strengthen other aspects of domestic education," he observed.

Riley, an advocate of dual-language schools, expressed hope that "every school in the U.S. will use technology to

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



THIS MONTH'S FOCUS: ARTS EDUCATION

U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
UPDATE
Issue No. 83 January 2001

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Community Update is published ten times a year by the U.S. Department of Education.
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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

share information with a school from another country. This would encourage children to learn a second language and invite teachers to work together to meet the challenges that arise in every classroom."

Serving from 1993–2000, Richard Riley has had the longest running career as Secretary in the history of the Department of Education, since its creation in 1980.

For a full copy of his speech, visit www.ed.gov/Speeches/11-2000/001116.html.

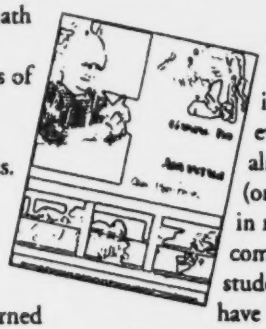


# A Bigger Picture of Arts Education

Recent research confirms the importance of studying the arts. While there is some disagreement about the magnitude of its benefit in improving math and reading scores, evidence points to the positive benefits of integrating the arts into the curriculum for a variety of academic and social outcomes. These benefits include:

In one survey, nearly 80 percent of eighth-graders highly involved in the arts earned mostly As and Bs in English compared to theirs peers who were less involved (64.2 percent).
—*Champions of Change*, a compilation of seven major studies on the effects of arts on student achievement in grades K–12.

"The occupants of arts-centered schools see themselves as members of communities…[T]he arts encourage students and faculty members to work together, to create things together, to perform together, to display the results of their efforts together."
—*Gaining the Arts Advantage*, a summary of high quality programs in 91 school districts across the country.

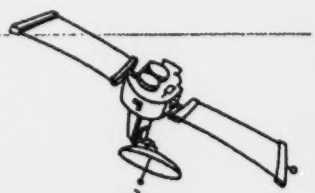


Students who were asked to play instruments almost every day scored almost twice as high, (on average, 53 percent) in music performance as compared to those students who did not have music all year (27 percent).
— *The NAEP 1997 Arts Report Card*, a national assessment of the arts in grade 8.

These reports are available at www.aep-arts.org, the Web site for the Arts Education Partnership, a coalition of educators, arts organizations, and citizen groups.

For additional resources for teaching and learning the arts, visit www.ed.gov/pubs/StateArt/Arts/resource.html.

# Satellite Town Meeting



**Tuesday, January 16**
**8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.**

A Miami high school where students feel safe; a Navajo reservation where schools use technology to revolutionize learning; and a community-wide effort in Michigan where the housing authority and the police are helping students learn to read are among the programs featured in the January Satellite Town Meeting, "The Good News in Education: Best Practices in School and Community Partnerships." The pre-recorded program will highlight stories from recent broadcasts.

To join the Satellite Town Meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit www.ed.gov/satelliteevent. Also, view live or archived Webcasts of the meeting by visiting Apple Computer's Apple Learning Interchange at http://ali.apple.com/events/aliqttv/.

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund, and Target Stores.



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# Life Lessons in the Arts

By E. Frank Bluestein, *Germantown, Tennessee*

Recently I heard from two former students. Paul came by to tell me that a major national firm had hired him as a division manager in its accounting department, the youngest person ever to be placed in this position.

I asked him how he got the job. He quickly pointed to his involvement in the theatre arts program at our school. The enhanced self-esteem, the courage to take risks, the ability to clearly articulate one's thoughts, the discipline required to get it right, the rush of emotion experienced through creation—these were the factors that allowed him to be selected from over fifty or so older candidates.

Jim also wrote to tell me of his recent success with a major broadcast network in Los Angeles. He is a writer, producer and video editor. He reminded me how his parents had tried to convince him that he needed a "real" career to fall back on just in case the "artsy" thing didn't work out. He confided that "through the arts I am able to see the world more clearly and understand myself more deeply."

Arts teachers are often on the defensive, forced to justify the what, how, and why of what we do. Some of my colleagues' arguments follow the "Mozart effect" rationale: arts training is valuable because it helps student achievement throughout all areas of the curriculum.

Other teachers will tell you that the arts should be considered as significant as any core subject. Harvard researchers Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland recently wrote that "the arts are as important as the sciences, and that a central purpose of education is to teach our children to appreciate great human creations of all sorts."

My own sense of it is that arts education is inherently valuable because it does both things simultaneously. It helps students learn incredible life lessons that they can apply in any field.

Equally important, the arts in and of themselves are a critical component in the development of every child. The arts in multiple ways permeate every aspect of the human experience. I don't have the statistics of a Harvard researcher, but I do have letters, e-mails and calls from former students like Jim and Paul that would back me up. And I suspect a lot of other arts teachers out there have the same.

*E. Frank Bluestein is chairman of the Fine Arts Department at Germantown High School and the founder of the school's theatre, the Poplar Pike Playhouse. He is the 1994 Tennessee Teacher of the Year and the 1996–97 Disney and McDonald's Performing Arts Teacher of the Year. He is also a frequent speaker and writer on arts-related issues.*

# Arts After School

Around the country, many communities have found a way to put together two good ideas—arts education and after-school programs—in a powerful combination.

Offering activities such as theater, music, dance, creative writing, and visual arts can increase student achievement, decrease students' involvement in delinquent behavior, and improve their attitudes about themselves and their future. Integrating arts activities with after-school programs also gives schools and communities new opportunities to build partnerships.

A new publication called *How the Arts Can Enhance After-School Programs* describes several examples of schools and communities around the country working together in innovative ways.

For example, "Arts Attack!" is a Calhoun County, Florida, program funded by a 21st Century Learning Center grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The W.T. Neal Civic Center teams with Blountstown Middle School to offer summer day camps, Saturday morning programs, and tutoring, mentoring, and counseling for 170 students and their families. Said the program's Suella McMillan, "These are kids who don't get out to museums, so we bring the world to them."

For a free copy of *How the Arts Can Enhance After-School Programs*, call 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827), or visit www.ed.gov/pubs.

For the past three years, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities have recognized ten outstanding after-school arts programs with "Coming Up Taller" awards of $10,000 each. For more information, visit http://arts.endow.gov/partner/Taller00/Intro.html.

## Arts Education Partnership

Many of the research reports mentioned in this issue are available online at the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) Web site (www.aep-arts.org). Founded in 1994, AEP is composed of over 100 national education and arts organizations that promote the essential role of arts education for all students. For the past several years, AEP has focused on community- and local partnerships. In 1999 it issued *Improving Practice: A Guide for Communities*, to help them combine their talents and resources to address arts education needs. A checklist is also available on their Web site.

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# The ART of Student Success!

Learning at Harmony Leland Elementary School in Mableton, Georgia, is a form of art. A unit on Mexico, for instance, was a virtual trip to the country in which first graders dressed up in ponchos, ate tacos, danced to Salsa, greeted each other with "!hola!" and hand-crafted maracas, as they learned about the history of the Aztec Empire.

Every aspect of the arts—music, drama, dance and visual arts—was woven into one lesson.

"It was just phenomenal," said teacher Denise Walker, who donned a flight attendant uniform for the imaginary airplane to Mexico. "The kids were super-excited about it. And the skills they mastered in such a short amount of time were totally amazing."

Walker, a third-year teacher, says this "artful learning" approach that Harmony Leland adopted two years ago has completely changed her teaching style as well as her outlook on how children learn.

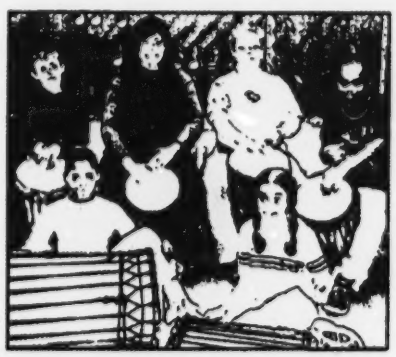
The method is the handiwork of the Leonard Bernstein Center (LBC) for Learning, one of the education programs at the Grammy® Foundation. Based on seven years of collaboration and field research with educators and researchers, the center prepares teachers, through an ongoing series of professional workshops, to use the arts to strengthen teaching and learning in all subjects.

"The real idea of this program is to get the students to enjoy learning," says Michael Greene, president, the Grammy Foundation. "It's less about specific content than it is about the process of learning. Once you engage the kids, the rest will come."

The Bernstein project is part of a larger effort to develop every student into a fluent reader. In 1998, amid efforts to revitalize the school, Harmony Leland became the first Leonard Bernstein Center in Georgia. Located in a suburb of Atlanta, the school had been undergoing drastic demographic changes in the last five years, shifting to a majority African-American population, with more than half of the students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch.

"When I came, Harmony Leland was a school that needed a new vision," said Principal Sandra McGary, formerly Cobb County schools' cultural diversity coordinator, who joined Harmony Leland three years ago to turn around the school.

The community was already clamoring for an arts curriculum to team up Harmony Leland with the arts magnet high school into which the elementary school would eventually feed its students. The superintendent at that time had started a Bernstein Center back in his Nashville, Tennessee, district and encouraged McGary to take a look. McGary, along with a group of teachers from Harmony Leland and the local middle school, made the visit and then trav-



*Music teacher Crystal Peters and students learn as they play.*





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eled to Portland, Oregon, to see another LBC school.

"We saw kids excited about learning. We saw kids running to get to class. Then we saw kids being able to explain the lesson and retain the information that they were taught even a year earlier. And we looked at those kids, and we looked at each other, and we knew that we could make this work at Harmony Leland," said McGary. The project has full staff participation, including the special needs and physical education teachers.

Although Harmony Leland is in its second year as a Leonard Bernstein school, last year's test scores reveal, at certain grade levels, a 13–18 percent increase in reading for which McGary credits the Bernstein model as a tool that engaged the students in learning.

Each grade-level unit is tailored to meet the district's standards, providing a framework of creative ideas for teaching the core curriculum. For example, the Bernstein unit may suggest a masterwork of Picasso as an introduction to a geometry lesson.

"Everything is taught as an integrated curriculum. That's why this model fits so beautifully," says Susan Hanson, facilitator for the Bernstein project and Harmony Leland's learner support strategist.

For a third-grade lesson on Africa, in which the overarching concept was "patterns," the music teacher fused the arts with several disciplines. For example, students created complex rhythms using mathematics. They also used math formulas to build 15 West African drums, with help from high school students.

"It was fun, because I did a lot of things I've never done before," said Nia Oates, now in the fourth grade. She said what she remembered most about the lesson was the language, in which her class translated English words into Swahili, developed their own symbols based on a study of different symbols from Ghana, and then created their own Web pages as a final project.

Music teacher Crystal Peters learned to expand the lesson from the training workshops that she attended as part of the Bernstein program. For a week in the summer, teachers receive training from a team of artists and education consultants that spans over three years. McGary and her staff are hoping Harmony Leland can become a training site to prepare more schools.

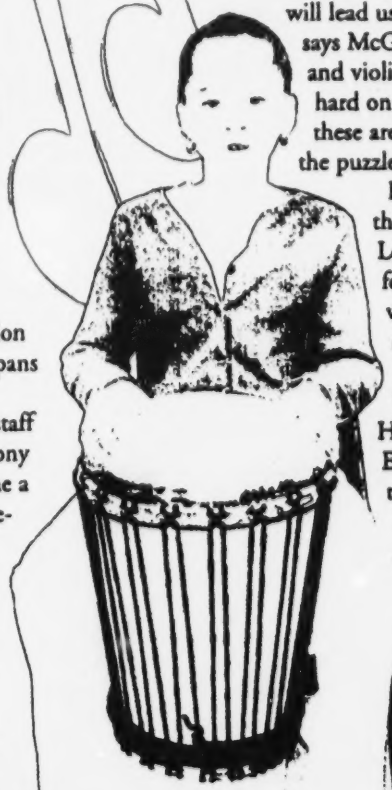
In addition to the Bernstein partnership, the school started a unique program that affords every student a violin to take home. More than 500 violins are on loan, free of charge, a venture McGary says has been funded with "a lot of prayer" and the school board's support.

"The violin is one of the most difficult instruments to learn to play," explains Hanson. "Not that they will perfect the instrument, but they will learn the discipline of the instrument, to motivate them to do better in their schoolwork."

In the spring, 25 Harmony Leland students will join the Atlanta Youth Symphony in an event facilitated by the Grammy Foundation.

"We have many different tools that will lead us to our literacy goal," says McGary, about the Bernstein and violin programs. "We work hard on so many things. And these are just the pieces that put the puzzle together."

For more information on the Grammy Foundation's Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning, visit www.grammy.com/foundation/lbc_main.html, or call 310-392-3777. To learn more about Harmony Leland Elementary School, contact Susan Hanson at 770-732-5635 or at larryh@mindspring.com.



*Nia Oates and one of the drums she helped build for a lesson on Africa.*

PARTNERSHIP
*for Family Involvement in Education*

***A coalition of more than 6,500 business, community, religious and education organizations nationwide. To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.***

# Arts Network Gives Bright Ideas in Education

Since 1952, Young Audiences (YA) has worked to make the arts an essential part of young people's education. This year alone Young Audiences presented nearly 100,000 professional performances, workshops and residencies in the performing, visual and literary arts. A leading network of arts in education services, YA reaches more than 8 million young people nationwide.

Yet, as remarkable as YA's reach has been, the organization believes it has a larger role to play in education. "The proliferation of new technologies, the explosion of languages and diverse cultures in our schools, and the ever-shifting landscape of the workplace have led to a re-examination of how to improve teaching and learning," says Richard Bell, national executive director of YA. "In initiating value-added resources for schools, Young Audiences is committed to being responsive to these realities."

In recent years, in YA communities across the country, artists and teachers have uncovered ways in which the arts can help students meet high academic standards. This has led Young Audiences to develop Arts for Learning (A4L), an innovative program that uses the Internet and the media to help teachers access best practices nationwide.

*Visual Artist Charlotte Lindsey works with students to create a mosaic.*

In a three-year national field test, Arts for Learning harnesses the power of the arts in a dynamic application of technology to live artists' programs and teacher professional development services.

A4L gives teachers access to community cultural providers, arts specialists and classroom teachers within their school system and across the country. The A4L Web site allows teachers and artists to collaborate and create ways in which specific arts programs can be used to reach students with varied learning styles, languages and special needs.

Over the next two years, Arts for Learning will expand to include up to 15 community sites in urban, suburban and rural school districts and 10 A4L Nexus sites, partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, focusing on specific arts disciplines and special areas of interest. Each site will be connected to every community and Nexus site. A4L community sites currently online or in development include Atlanta, Indianapolis, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, and San José.

For more information about Young Audiences and Arts for Learning, visit www.youngaudiences.org, or e-mail eva@ya.org.

# Free Resources Available from the Partnership

The Partnership is starting off the New Year with a recently published booklet about the benefits of the arts in after-school programs. "We want to make it better known to communities that the arts is a way of providing high-quality after-school learning," says Director Menahem Herman.

Available also are a number of materials on family involvement in education that include research findings, tips and examples of effective practices. To request a copy, call 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) with the order number below, while supplies last. A few of these publications are also available online at http://pfie.ed.gov.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

**How the Arts Can Enhance After-School Programs** provides an overview of arts programs that support after-school efforts in communities nationwide. It also includes a special section on useful Web sites and publications. (EE0455B)

**Programas Despues de las Horas de Clase** is the Spanish translation of *After-school Programs: Keeping Children Safe and Smart*, a new publication with a summary of research findings, programs and resources that can be used to strengthen local after-school efforts. (EE0448P)

**A Call to Commitment: Fathers' Involvement in Children's Learning** features examples of effective practices for strengthening fathers' involvement at school and in the community. (EK0277P)

**Partnership for Family Involvement in Education CD-ROM Tool Kit**, which includes overheads and key publications, groups materials by four sectors—family/school, community, employers, and faith-based organizations—for easy use. (EE0453C)

**Partnership for Family Involvement in Education: Who We Are and What We Do** is a snapshot of the activities of more than 6,500 Partner organizations who are encouraging family involvement in education. (EK0259P)

**1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey Results** reports what attracts organizations to the Partnership, and provides a comparison of 1998 and 1999 survey results. (EE0444W)

## ABOUT *our*

Target Stores and the Tiger Woods Foundation are helping children start believing, start exploring, and start building, with "Start Something," a program that encourages children ages 11–14 to realize and fulfill their dreams.

"What we want to teach kids with Start Something is that each one of them has a dream, whether or not they even realize it," said Tiger Woods. "Once they come to this realization, then we encourage them to work toward their dreams in stages—just like I did with golf."

Participants in the program complete five levels of character building activities that include a promise to read for 20 minutes a day. Those who advance to the last level and demonstrate leadership ability quality to apply for a $10,000 scholarship, among a number of incentives.

Launched this past October, Start Something is based on both organizations' shared interest in helping communities and America's youth. Using golf as a platform, the Tiger Woods Foundation for the last five years has been engaging the community in helping young people to pursue their goals. With a long history of supporting community efforts, Target Stores reinvests more than $1 million a week into its local communities through grants and special programs.

Children can join Start Something, free of charge, by logging on to http://startsomething.target.com or by filling out a registration card at any Target store.

## CALENDAR

**May 9,** Washington, D.C. *Partnership for Family Involvement in Education National Meeting.* Call 202-401-0056, or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.

**May 10–11,** Washington, D.C. *The Conference Board's "Business and Education 2001 Conference: Leveraging Technology—A Call to Action."* Call 212-339-0345, or visit www.conference-board.org/b&e.htm.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The current issue of *The Evaluation Exchange*, the newsletter for the Harvard Family Research Project, connects research, policy and promising practices for after-school programs. The publication is available online at http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hfrp/eval/issue15/index.html. For a hardcopy, call 617-496-4304, while supplies last; please specify Vol. VI, No. 1.

The Disney Learning Partnership launched a "Family/School Connections" link as part of its Web site, www.DisneyLearning.org. This new resource provides opportunities for parents and teachers to share ideas for building successful collaborations.

Another new Web feature, the "Classroom Homepage Builder" from Scholastic Inc. will allow parents to log onto www.scholastic.com/parents/index.htm and, through links to teachers' e-mail addresses, receive information about classroom school assignments, test schedules and day-to-day activities.

***While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.***

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COMMUNITY
Issue No. 83 UPDATE January 2001

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FIRST CLASS

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# Web Resources for Arts Education

The arts meet technology in a resource that helps enrich the classroom experience through artful learning. Students, parents and teachers can access a host of online arts education resources through the Federal Resources for Educational Excellence at www.ed.gov/free/s-arts.html. The National Gallery of Art, for example, coordinates an arts education program that loans over 150 teaching resources free of charge to educational institutions and organizations and individuals.

**Art Nouveau: 1890-1914**
Over 350 pieces done in this innovative modern art style are part of this exhibit. The collection contains paintings, sculptures, graphics, glass, ceramics, textiles, furniture, jewelry, and architecture. Visit www.nga.gov/exhibitions/nouveauinfo.htm.

**Georgia O'Keefe: A Portrait**
Alfred Steiglitz took more than 330 photographs of Georgia O'Keefe for almost twenty years to create the composite portrait, where one model was studied for an extended period of time. Visit www.nga.gov/feature/stieglitz/4intro.htm.

**Omaha Indian Music**
Traditional Omaha Indian culture can be experienced through music from the 1890s; songs and spoken-word from a 1983 Omaha harvest celebration pow-wow; and an interview with an Omaha musician in 1999, which can be found on the Library of Congress' Web site http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/omh-html/omhhome.html.

**ArtsEdNet**
The J. Paul Getty Art Museum in Los Angeles, Calif., provides materials and resources for arts education through their site www.artsednet.getty.edu. Teachers and students can find ideas for using art in the curriculum along with a library of related publications.

U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 84 | U P D A T E | Special January 2001

*Record appropriations bill is a "landmark in the nation's commitment to the education of our children."*

*U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley*

BUDGET DETAILS INSIDE

## Education Budget Is Largest Ever

*Secretary Riley Calls 18 Percent Increase a "Landmark"*

The largest budget increase in history for education programs featured prominently in the Fiscal Year 2001 budget agreement approved by Congress on December 15, 2000.

The spending bill is considered a landmark achievement for schools and communities, providing a $6.5 billion (18 percent) increase through the U.S. Department of Education.

A recent General Accounting Office report found that over 99 percent of the education appropriations for 10 of the largest programs went to states and local schools. A total of $42.1 billion is now available for states, colleges and districts to improve education.

"First and foremost, this budget tops eight years of commitment to education with a dramatic new investment in our nation's schools," President Clinton said after the lengthy negotiations on the education bill. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley noted, "The 18 percent increase over last year is the largest one-year increase in education funding in the Department's history."

The FY 2001 budget establishes a new school repair initiative with $1.2 billion. The funds are intended to help schools make urgently needed building repairs and renovations, serve children with disabilities, and invest in technology. The new monies also provide a new charter school facility-financing pilot program. After-school programs will receive the largest ever increase—88 percent—with $845 million to create 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Funding for special education and related services for children with disabilities aged birth through 21 years also increased in the fiscal year 2001 budget. State grants under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act will rise by nearly $1.4 billion, to $7.4 billion.

The Education budget passed

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 84 UPDATE Special Jan. 2001

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Congress as part of an omnibus appropriations package that also included the largest-ever increase for Head Start. Signed by President Clinton on December 21, 2000, the appropriations agreement ended a long process of negotiations between Congress and the administration. Secretary Riley hailed the appropriations bill as a "landmark in the nation's commitment to the education of our children."

State-by-state and national budget tables can be found on the Department of Education's Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/budget.html.

## Improving Teacher Quality

Additional funding across several grant programs is dedicated to improving teacher quality this year. The funding will help states invest in professional development, recruit qualified new teachers, retain dedicated teachers, expand the mid-career military professionals program, "Troops to Teachers," and train early childhood educators. For more information about the Troops to Teachers program, call the U.S. Department of Defense at 1-800-231-6242.

### *Eisenhower State Grants for Teacher Professional Development*

An increase of $150 million will be available to states and school districts for teachers to improve their skills in core academic subjects. This will help school districts increase the number of certified teachers and provide additional training for teachers. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SIP, or contact Dan Bonner at 202-260-2517.

### *Eisenhower National Activities Grants*

These grants will help states recruit and train teachers while improving overall teacher quality with special emphasis on early childhood educators. The grants will also enable school districts to reach out to talented mid-career professionals and college graduates to encourage them to pursue teaching. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OERI, or contact Patricia Ross at 202-219-2169.

### *Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology*

About 110,000 new teachers will learn how to effectively use modern technology in their classrooms. Consortiums developing innovative teacher preparation programs are eligible to apply. The application is available now and is due February 22. For an application and more information, visit www.ed.gov/teachtech, or call 202-502-7788.

### *Bilingual Professional Development*

This grant will help colleges and universities prepare 18,000 high-quality teachers a year to serve limited English-proficient students. These 131professional development grants will help meet the critical need in this area. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA, or contact Cynthia Ryan at 202-205-8842.

## Special Education

The Fiscal Year 2001 budget for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is $10 billion, which represents a $1.51 billion or 17 percent increase over the Fiscal Y 2000 appropriation. The bill provides $6.3 billion for Special Education Grants to states, an increase of $1.3 billion ov 2000. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS, or call 202-205-2213.

## Safe and Drug-Free School

Grants are available to help schools become safe and drug-free learning environments through a variety of activities

### *Safe Schools/Healthy Students*

An appropriation of $117 million will support 35 new projects and continue existing projects. School districts and communities will receive support to he link community-based services and prevention activities and to design and implement comprehensive educational mental health, social service, law enforcement, and juvenile justice services for youth. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/gran or call Karen Dorsey at 202-708-4674

### *Project SERV*

An allocation of $10 million will be available for emergency assistance to schools dealing with serious violence o traumatic crisis. Project SERV will provide communities with resources to





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# Investing in America's Students

respond to immediate crisis needs; to provide increased security and ongoing counseling; and to help state and local officials plan for, prevent and respond to similar tragedies. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS, or contact Charlotte Gillespie at 202-260-1862.

## Preparing for and Completing College

***Pell Grants***

For many financially needy undergraduate students, Pell Grants provide a foundation of financial aid to which other aid may be added. The maximum award has been increased to $3,750, providing grant assistance to approximately 3.9 million low-income undergraduate students. For more information, call 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

***GEAR UP***

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) gives disadvantaged middle school students and their families pathways to college through partnerships and state-administered programs. These partnerships provide tutoring, mentoring, information on college preparation and financial aid, an emphasis on core academic preparation and, in some cases, scholarships for approximately 1.2 million low-income students. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/gearup, or call Rafael Ramirez at 202-502-7795.

***TRIO Programs***

TRIO programs provide education outreach and student support services designed to help disadvantaged individuals enter and complete college. The increase in funding ($85 million to $730 million) will help an additional 765,000 disadvantaged students, prepare for and persist in postsecondary education. It would also provide academic and career counseling, admissions and financial aid information and tutoring services to middle and high school students. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/HEP/trio, or call Frances Bergeron at 202-502-7600.

***Work-Study***

Federal Work-Study helps undergraduate and graduate students with financial need pay for education expenses by providing part-time work assistance. The increase will maintain the opportunity for a total of 1 million students to work their way through college. In addition, the federal government pays up to 100 percent of the wages of college students who tutor children in reading and math—a free resource for schools in need of volunteer tutors. For more information, call 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

## Class-Size Reduction Program

The Class-Size Reduction Program helps schools improve student learning by hiring additional, highly qualified teachers so that children in early grades can attend smaller classes. Research shows that students attending small classes in the early grades make more rapid educational progress than students in larger classes, and that this potential achievement continues in the later grades. An allocation of $1.6 billion dollars (a 25 percent increase from last year) will enable school districts to hire 8,000 more teachers. In its third year, the Class-Size Reduction Program will support the 29,000 teachers already hired. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/OESE/ClassSize, or call 202-401-0113.

## Title I Accountability Grants

States and school districts can receive assistance through the Title I grants program to improve and expand initiatives to turn around their lowest-performing schools. A total of $225 million will be used to intensify teacher training, implement proven reform of schools, and provide structured assistance to school districts. The program will help some 1,800 more schools this year. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CEP, or call Susan Wilhelm at 202-260-0984.

## 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grants Program, after-school learning opportunities will be nearly doubled, with an 88 percent increase from last year. Roughly half of the increase will fund new programs selected in last year's competition. A new competition will allocate the remaining funds of approximately $200 million. Approximately 650,000 school-age children in 3,100 new centers will be served in before- and after-school enrichment and summer programs. Some 1.3 million children will participate in the program nationwide. School districts and their community partners can apply for the grant beginning in early January, and the targeted closing date is March 30. Please note that the grant application must show a strong partnership between the applying schools and community partners. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/21stcclc, or contact Pete Eldridge at 202-260-2514 or Amanda Clyburn at 202-260-3804.

*Note:* In addition to the above initiatives, a number of other budget increases can help improve schools and colleges. Arts education, international education and foreign language acquisition, adult education and civic literacy, charter schools, reading, comprehensive school reform, community technology learning centers, and small and successful high schools are also among the activities that received new or expanded funding.

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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 84 UPDATE Special Jan. 2001

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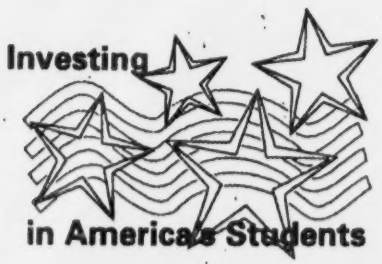
FIRST CLASS

IN THIS ISSUE:




PAGE 2

# New Money for Modernizing Schools

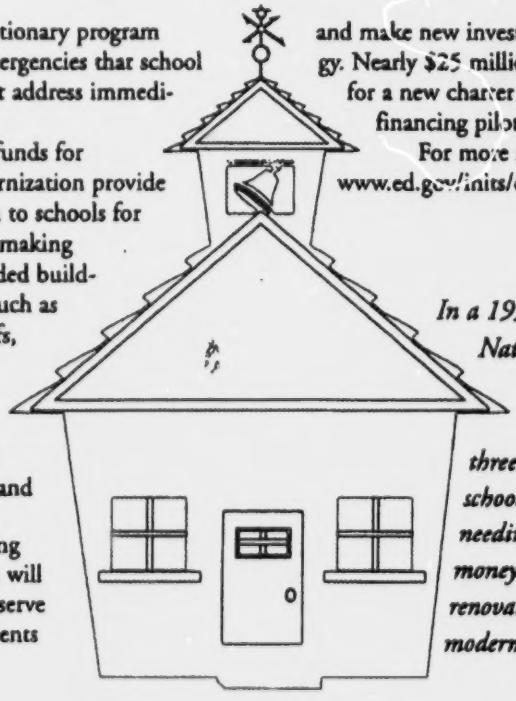
Communities across the country are struggling to address critical needs to renovate existing schools. School construction and modernization are necessary to address urgent safety and facility needs, to accommodate rising student enrollments, to help reduce class sizes, to make sure schools are accessible to all students, and to modernize buildings so they are well-equipped for the 21st century.

As part of the Fiscal Year 2001 Budget, a new Urgent School Renovation initiative provides $1.2 billion to repair America's schools and much-needed repair funds to Native American schools.

The new initiative addresses the urgent short-term and long-term facilities challenges that school districts face. A new discretionary program will fund emergencies that school districts must address immediately.

The new funds for school modernization provide $901 million to schools for assistance in making urgently needed building repairs, such as repair of roofs, plumbing and electrical systems, and meeting fire and safety codes. Grants totaling $274 million will help schools serve disabled students and make new investments in technology. Nearly $25 million will be available for a new charter school facility-financing pilot program.

For more information, visit www.ed.gov/inits/construction.



*In a 1999 study by the National Center for Education Statistics, three-fourths of the schools surveyed reported needing to spend some money on repairs, renovations, and modernizations.*

U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 85 | UPDATE | February/March 2001

*"If you target children and only talk about the 'problem' ones, you end up getting a self-fulfilling prophecy."*

*Ron Anderson, grant director of Wake County's Safe Schools/Healthy Students project*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

## Studies Report Declining Rate of School Violence

*Secret Service Study Explores Early Detection in School Shootings*

Although several high-profile shootings over the past decade have created the perception that schools are no longer safe, overall school violence continues to drop, according to an annual report card on school crime.

Since 1992, crime against students—including theft, rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault—has decreased by nearly a third. There were 101 incidents per 1,000 students in 1998, compared to 144 crimes per 1,000 nine years ago.

One of several related studies released this past October, the *2000 Annual Report on School Safety*—jointly authored by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice—confirms that schools remain among the safest places for children and youth. This past school year, 90 percent of the nation's schools reported no serious violent crime, and 43 percent say they experienced no crime at all.

"We need to strike a balance between holding all students accountable for their actions and ensuring that all students are provided with the resources necessary to succeed to the highest standards," said Bill Modzeleski, director of the Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools program. "We need to be able to respond to early warning signs in troubled students without unfairly stigmatizing kids."

A companion document to the report, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2000,* reveals a significant decline in the number of students in grades 9 through 12 who reported carrying a weapon to school one or more days during the previous month—from 12 percent in 1993 to 7 percent in 1999.

While violent deaths at schools are extremely rare events, the Department of Education is partnering with the Secret Service to develop training aids



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

U.S. Department of Education

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Issue No. 85 Feb./Mar. 2001

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*Community Update* is published by the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

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# Tips for Creating a Safe School

The *1998 Annual Report on School Safety* provides the following list of suggestions to help schools create safe environments where all students can learn:

1. *Provide strong administrative support for assessing and enhancing school safety.*
2. *Redesign the school facility to eliminate dark, secluded and unsupervised spaces.*
3. *Devise a system for reporting and analyzing violent and non-criminal incidents.*
4. *Design an effective school discipline policy.*
5. *Build a partnership with local law enforcement.*
6. *Enlist trained school security professionals in designing and maintaining the school security system.*
7. *Train school staff, including support staff, in all aspects of violence prevention.*
8. *Provide all students access to school psychologists or counselors.*
9. *Provide crisis response services.*
10. *Implement schoolwide education and training on avoiding and preventing violence and violent behavior.*
11. *Use alternate school settings for educating violent and weapon-carrying students.*
12. *Create a climate of tolerance.*
13. *Provide appropriate educational services to all students.*
14. *Reach out to communities and businesses to assist in improving the safety of students.*
15. *Actively involve students in making decisions about school policies and programs.*
16. *Prepare an annual report on school crime and safety and distribute to the public.*

A complete list of strategies for communities and parents is available in the *1998 Annual Report on School Safety*, which can be downloaded from www.ed.gov/pubs/AnnSchoolRept98.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

for school administrators, local law enforcement personnel and others to help prevent further attacks at schools.

These incidents of "targeted violence"—in which an attacker selects a particular target prior to a violent attack—are the focus of an ongoing research project that began approximately two years ago.

The Secret Service, which is responsible for protecting national leaders including the president, shared its expertise in threat assessment for a review of 37 U.S. school shootings that date as far back as 1974. Preliminary findings are available in *An Interim Report on the Prevention of Violence in Schools.*

The report warns that "the use of profiles carries a risk of over-identification" and advises schools and communities to redirect their focus to student "behaviors and communications" to determine the probability for a violent attack.

Conclusions drawn in the interim report confirm that:

- Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely impulsive. The attacks are typically the end result of an understandable and often discernible process of thinking and behavior.
- Prior to most incidents, the attacker told someone about his idea and/or plan.
- There is no accurate or useful profile of "the school shooter."
- Most attackers had previously used guns and had access to them.
- Most shooting incidents were not resolved by law enforcement intervention.
- In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
- In a number of cases, having been bullied played a key role in the attack.

These reports are available only online. They can be downloaded from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools' Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/news.html, which provides links to each publication. For more information, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).



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# The Boston Miracle

**An Interview with *Mike Hennessey*, Assistant Chief of Boston School Police**

***Mike Hennessey supervises the police force assigned to 120 schools in Boston, Massachusetts. He began his career in 1974 and reached the rank of lieutenant in 1995, investigating gang activity. Last spring, he became assistant chief.***

***Have you witnessed a shift in behavior affecting school safety?***

Between 1979 and 1986, we started to see street-level crime and the use of drugs. A lot of kids would come to school with cigarette packs full of joints and sell them. Along with this, packs of kids—four to six of them—would rob individuals, stealing chains, anything the kid had of value. So there was a feeling of mistrust. A lot of kids were afraid to have this happen to them.

As a result, kids started to have friends they walked with for protection. They started to carry weapons, like knives, to school. Ironically, the kids who needed protection formed gangs themselves. By 1987, we had the beginnings of a real bad gang problem.

What we found from 1987 to 1993 was that what occurred on the streets affected the schools, because it would play out the next day—and vice versa.

***How did you become proactive?***

About 1993, the Boston police, school police, clergy, courts, probation department, youth services, street workers and federal government formed collaborations. The gangs terrorizing the neighborhood were investigated, and the most violent

ones were prosecuted. They took the gangs out one by one.

By 1995 things really started to quiet down. The collaborations made a big difference because we're all stakeholders in this city now. The clergy, for instance, give us credibility. You're always going to have the police telling the kids "not to get in trouble and be good." But if you have a clergy member standing next to you saying "yeah, that's right," the kids know the clergy loves them and wouldn't be telling them that if it wasn't true. And when the kids see this, they know people care about them.

***What are some preventive measures Boston has employed?***

We do three presentations a week in schools, warning them about the dangers of gang membership. We've talked to over 17,000 kids. At night, we make home visits to at-risk families. We also offer kids summer jobs and after-school programs, because the hours from 2 to 6 p.m. are the most dangerous.

A companion piece is an anti-gang presentation done by female police officers to teach young women about the effects of gang membership.

***Since you became proactive, how much has crime been reduced?***

In 1991, there were 151 homicides in the city, many of them juveniles. This past year, we had 40 homicides—less than 3 involved juveniles. The reduction in youth violence we've experienced is known as the "Boston Miracle."

# Satellite Town Meeting

**Tuesday, February 20**
**8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.**

Communities and school systems around the country are working collaboratively in new and creative ways to help make schools safer for students. Effective strategies include community wide and school wide efforts that promote healthy child development and reduce school violence and drug abuse. The February Satellite Town Meeting, "Keeping Schools and Communities Safe: Collaborating for Healthy Children" will feature programs focused on prevention, intervention and accountability.

To join the Satellite Town Meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit www.ed.gov/satelliteevent. Also, view live or archived Webcasts of the meeting by visiting Apple Computer's Apple Learning Interchange at http://ali.apple.com/events/aliqttv.

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund, and Target Stores.

Many of the references for creating safe schools in this issue were provided by the Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. For more information, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS.

Since 1999, the new program initiative Safe Schools/Healthy Students has awarded a total of grants to communities working in partnership with local agencies in order to support school safety and health programs. To learn more about Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant opportunities, visit www.sshsai.org.



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# OUT OF HARM'S WAY

## *Keeping the "Whole Child" Safe in Wake County, N.C.*

The Wake County Public School System in North Carolina believes that creating a safe school requires more than instituting metal detectors and stockade fences. In fact, it employs neither of these two measures.

To have healthy students, thus safer schools, Wake County aims to ensure students' physical, mental and emotional well-being. The school district has put into place clinic-like centers in elementary schools that offer young children everything from immunizations to early language development programs.

In addition, Wake County schools adopted a number of national programs that teach students about empathy and anger management, making friends and preventing violence.

"We're looking at the whole child, that's why we started out with character education," says Ron Anderson, grant director of Wake County's Safe Schools/Healthy Students project. "Character ed basically means asking 'what kind of whole person do we want?' We don't just want a child who makes good grades. We want a child who is a good citizen."

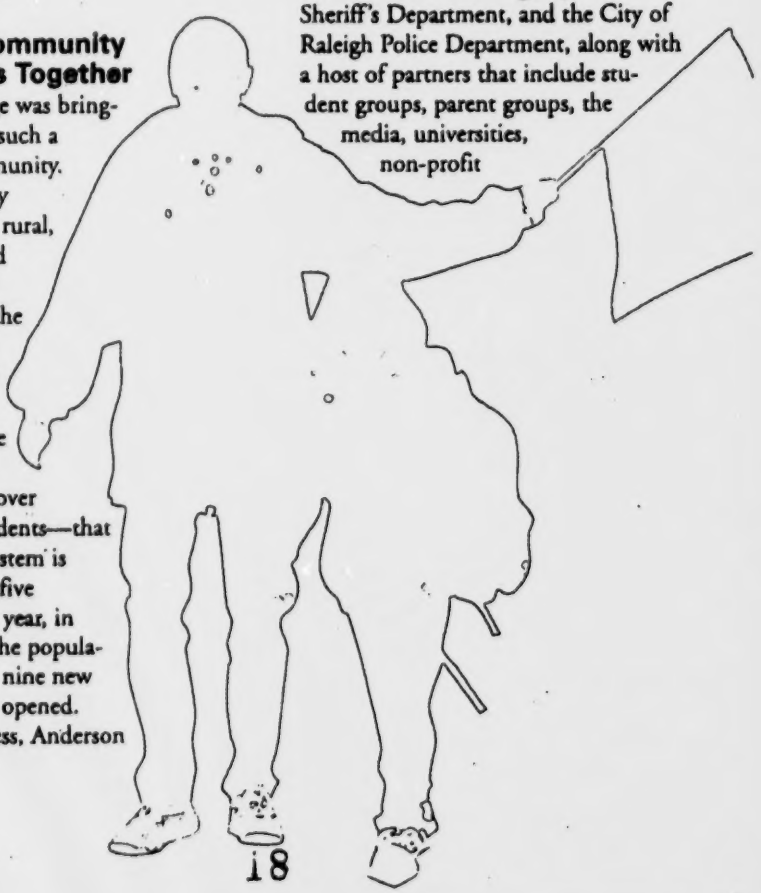
Two years ago Wake County received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education through its Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative to combine existing and new services into a comprehensive, community-wide approach. "The grant helped us move in dramatically new and bold directions in those areas," Anderson said.

### Pulling Community Resources Together

The challenge was bringing together such a diverse community. Wake County encompasses rural, suburban and urban areas, with one of the largest gaps between rich and poor in the state. The county is so large—with over 600,000 residents—that the school system is divided into five regions. Last year, in response to the population growth, nine new schools were opened.

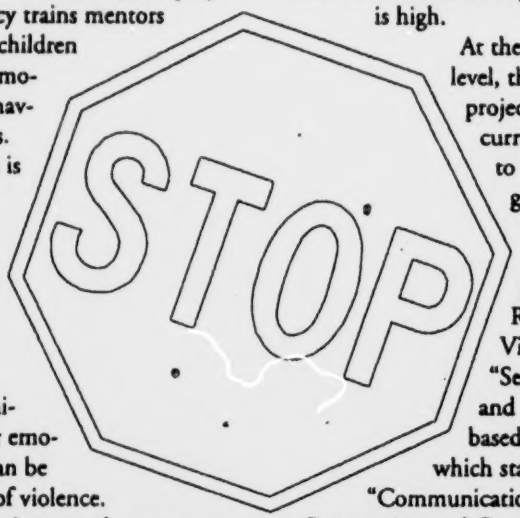
Nonetheless, Anderson said, the school system was able to find a consensus for its school safety initiative because "we looked at this from the perspective of 'what do we want to build?' rather than 'what do we want to fix?'"

For the grant, the Wake County Public School System joined with the local human services agency, the Sheriff's Department, and the City of Raleigh Police Department, along with a host of partners that include student groups, parent groups, the media, universities, non-profit



groups, and state and national organizations.

The human services agency, which serves mental health needs, is a major stakeholder in the Safe Schools project. The agency trains mentors to work with children with serious emotional and behavioral problems. Mental health is a critical element of the safety initiative because children suffering from depression, thoughts of suicide and other emotional issues can be prone to acts of violence.




Anderson points out that partnerships with the community also strengthen federal dollars, funneling local and state funds into the Safe Schools project. "Typically what communities have is not collaboration but cooperation. Cooperation essentially means 'I'm going to help you get this job done.' Collaboration means 'we're going to pull our resources together towards a common goal,'" he said.

## Starting Early for Safety

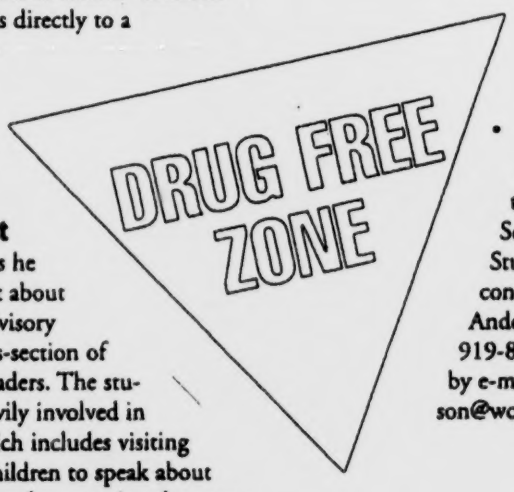
At the center of the Safe School investments are preschools. In its assessment of the community, Wake County found that early academic and behavior problems are the number one risk factor for securing safe schools. Anderson, who joined the school system in 1984 as a director of guidance and social work, said the correlation between academic success and less juvenile crime makes for safer schools.

The "Ready to Learn" centers, created over 10 years ago, provide young children with a variety of health and early development services on school premises. The "Parents as Teachers" program, in which trained staff make home visits, helps parents of newborns learn appropriate developmental skills.

Another family-oriented program, "Families and Schools Together (FAST)," works intensively with families for eight weekly sessions to involve them more in their children's education. School officials say attendance is high.

At the elementary level, the Safe Schools project includes three curriculum efforts to help children get along with each other—the national programs "Get Real About Violence" and "Second Step," and the research-based "3-C" project, which stands for "Communication, Cooperation and Confidence." The curricula is also taught in middle and high schools, where each school has a student club called "SAVE"—Students Against Violence Everywhere.

Physical security is also critical in Wake County schools, which uses cameras, keypad locks, badges and resource officers. Additionally, the crisis hotline "Save-A-Friend" connects student callers directly to a mental health practitioner.




## Student to Student

Anderson says he feels strongest about the Youth Advisory Board, a cross-section of 30 student leaders. The students are heavily involved in outreach, which includes visiting elementary children to speak about nonviolence, and sponsoring the annual Teen Summit, which engaged 350 students from all over the county last September.

Youth Advisory Board member Alix Feldman, a sophomore at Athens Drive High School in Raleigh, says her idea of a safe school is "one where you don't have to worry about finding alternate routes in the hallway because there's a fight going on." She added that it is also one where the administration is visible and highly interactive with students.

Wake County also found that youth programs were strong predictors of academic success, which is why the county is developing more activities for young people.

"When kids are in activities, they're meeting with adults who help build those assets and protective factors," said Anderson, referring to the 40 key assets—such as positive family communication, positive peer influence and a caring school climate—identified in a survey by the Search Institute of more than 13,000 Wake County students.

He said the study "helped us look at what kind of things we want to build for all kids, instead of 'those' kids. We're talking about success for all children. If you target children and only talk about the 'problem' ones, you end up getting a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Wake County received a three-year, $9 million grant to spread over 122 schools.

For more information about the county's Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, contact Ron Anderson at 919-850-1660 or by e-mail at rfanderson@wcpss.net.

PARTNERSHIP
*for Family Involvement in Education*

***A coalition of more than 7,100 business, community, religious and education organizations nationwide.***

# Parties Provide Safe Haven for Kansas High School Students

Parents in suburban Shawnee Mission, Kansas, know their children are safe on Friday nights, thanks to an idea that is practically from the school district's own backyard.

At Shawnee Mission West High, one of the area's five high school campuses, district staff work in partnership with the PTA to host "after parties." These parties, which average as many as 900 students, are held after home athletic events on Friday evenings. The admission fee is $1 per student and students are allowed to invite one guest each.

Although after parties are not new at Shawnee Mission—the first of them started over 15 years ago—they have grown in popularity. Whether they are limited to after-prom and graduation night parties or extend to parties following athletic events varies by school.

"The goal of the after party is to give a safe alternative to students on a Friday night," said Assistant Principal Kevin Burgat. "Many times the athletic events end around 9:00 p.m., and it is difficult for students to find activities to complete the evening. The after parties generally last two hours following the game and provide positive, safe activities for students until 11:30 p.m."

Nearly 60 parents help supervise the parties and coordinate the food and the disc jockey.

According to Burgat, these are primarily parent-driven activities and the administrators simply stay on hand with district security to handle any potential problems. The parties also allow parents an active role in their teenagers' lives at a time when their peers are central.

This year, a group of parents has worked with administrators at the school to develop a plan to deal with any emergencies, should they occur during the party.

Kristen Smith, parent of a former Shawnee Mission student and PTA volunteer, said, "I know we save lives every year by keeping kids in positive activities that provide an alternative to being out on the streets."

For more information, please contact Leigh Anne Neal, director of public information and communications, Shawnee Mission Public Schools, at 913-993-6447, or visit www.smsd.org

# Keeping Kids Safe in Los Angeles County

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) is playing a key role in keeping kids safe in the county's 81 school districts. In California, all public schools are required by state law to have comprehensive safety plans that address the threats impacting the campus climate. These include the challenges posed by racial conflicts, street gangs, and drug-related crime and violence.

Last year, Los Angeles County's K–12 campuses reported thousands of crimes, including battery, robbery/extortion, assault with a deadly weapon and property damage, resulting in overall losses of $7.9 million. The county is home to over 1,300

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

criminal street gangs comprised of more than 150,000 active members.

LACOE's Safe Schools Center provides local leadership and support to help ensure that all schools are secure, drug-free communities. Through a collaborative approach, the center has joined with community-based organizations, including the Richstone Family Center and the Centinela Juvenile Diversion Program, and law enforcement agencies such as the U.S. Department of Justice and the L.A. County Sheriff's Department. These groups work together to turn the tide—day by day, year by year.

"Effective instruction and learning happens when teachers and students go to class knowing that they're in a safe environment," says Donald W. Ingwerson, the county superintendent of schools. "There has to be freedom from fear."

Conflict resolution and mentoring programs have been particularly effective in this endeavor because they empower students to aid in problem solving. This is best exemplified by the successes of Leuzinger High School and Lennox Middle School. Both schools have seen a significant drop in the number of student suspensions and expulsions.

These two urban campuses were once plagued with racial tension, numerous gang activity and great concerns over classroom management. Now, the tensions have eased greatly and serious behavior problems have been mitigated. In short, the schools have become success stories.

"Without a doubt," adds Ingwerson, "safety is a prerequisite to academic excellence."

To learn more about programs and services provided by the Los Angeles County Office of Education, visit www.lacoe.edu, or contact Bill Ybarra at the Safe School Center at 562-922-6391.

## CALENDAR

**April 17–22,** Washington, D.C.
*National Association of School Psychologists 33rd Annual Convention.* Call 513-674-4258, or visit www.naspweb.org.

**May 9,** Washington, D.C.
*Partnership for Family Involvement in Education National Meeting.* Call 202-401-0056, or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.

**May 10–11,** Washington, D.C.
*Business and Education 2001 Conference: Leveraging Technology—A Call to Action.* Call The Conference Board at 212-339-0345, or visit www.conference-board.org/b&e.htm.

**May 28–30,** Atlanta, Georgia
*International Fatherhood Conference.* Call the National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership at 1-888-528-6725, or visit www.internationalfathers.com.

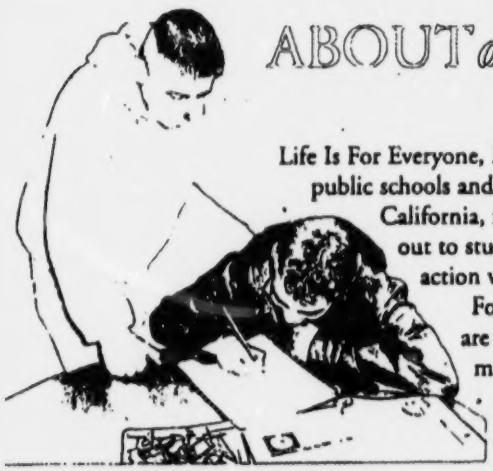
## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join the Partnership's listserv to receive the latest information on family involvement in education. Sign on at www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/partner_listserv.html.

The American Youth Policy Forum now has eight of its publications available free of charge on its Web site at www.aypf.org, including *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works—and What Doesn't,* and *Some Things DO Make a Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs.* For a hard copy while supplies last, fax a request to 202-775-9733, or write to The American Youth Policy Forum, 1836 Jefferson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*

## ABOUT *our*



*Pablo, LIFE graduate, now mentor-helps 13-year-old Daniel with his homework.*

Life Is For Everyone, Inc. (LIFE) is a partnership of public schools and faith communities in Salinas, California, formed for one purpose—to reach out to students who can benefit from interaction with caring and skilled adults.

Formed in 1998, four congregations are involved, each partnered with a middle or elementary school. Each church hosts a center for after-school activities three times a week, attended by between 10 and 50 students. These centers serve as neighborhood safe havens where school-referred children and young teens can develop the skills they need to be resilient and to make good decisions.

"These are kids who want to improve their grades but also want to do more than just study—they learn about getting jobs, writing resumes, and getting ready to graduate. The centers help students interact with each other, and teach about tolerance and being positive," said Steve Royster, LIFE's president of the board of directors.

For more information, contact Rev. Ken Feske at the First Baptist Church of Salinas at 831-422-9872 or by e-mail at kfeske@lstbaptist.net.

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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY UPDATE
Issue No. 85 Feb./Mar. 2001

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Permit NO. G-17

FIRST CLASS

IN THIS ISSUE:

**OUT OF HARM'S WAY**

PAGE 4

# Superintendent Appointed Education Secretary

On January 24, in a ceremony attended by both President Bush and Vice President Cheney, former Houston school superintendent Dr. Roderick R. Paige was sworn in as the seventh secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

"I will work with the men and women who have dedicated themselves to the Department of Education and to students across the country to empower states, school districts, schools and parents in order that we may serve the needs of our students," said Paige. "When each and every child in this country can receive a quality public education, we will have made history together."

As superintendent of the Houston Independent School District (HISD), the largest school district in Texas, Paige led several reform efforts for the school system that increased teachers' salaries, built partnerships with business and community leaders, and created a number of charter schools. In addition, Paige established the PEER (Peer Examination, Evaluation, and Redesign) committee, which focused on achieving a research-based comprehensive and balanced reading program for every school.

*Secretary Paige (right) and President Bush attend a school event commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr.*

As a recipient of the Safe Schools/ Healthy Students federal grant, HISD also provides after-school programs, mental health counseling, and family involvement opportunities to create safe environments on its 295 campuses. In February, Paige will host the Satellite Town Meeting, which will focus on school safety initiatives (see page 3 for details).

U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 86 | UPDATE | April 2001

*"The parents come back, saying, 'I just want to thank you all for what you did for my child and me.'"*

*Lue Alma Sumlin, director of the Margaret H. Cone Head Start Center*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

## President Issues Education Blueprint

*"No Child Left Behind" Plan Includes Reading, Other Improvements*

In one of his first official acts, President George W. Bush issued his blueprint for improving American education, called "No Child Left Behind." The plan proposes legislative actions and changes in U.S. Department of Education programs aimed at strengthening elementary and secondary schools and closing the achievement gap between rich and poor and white and minority students.

"I am pleased and proud that President Bush has made education his top priority," said U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige in testimony before the U.S. Congress. "Our commitment to providing a first-class education to all our children is clear."

The "No Child Left Behind" blueprint is based on four principles:

- **Increase accountability for student performance:** States, districts and schools that improve achievement would be rewarded. Failure will be sanctioned. Parents would know how well their child is learning, and that schools are held accountable for their effectiveness with annual state reading and math assessments in grades 3–8.
- **Focus on what works:** Federal dollars would be spent on effective, research-based programs and practices. Funds would be targeted to improve schools and enhance teacher quality.
- **Reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility:** Additional flexibility would be provided to states and school districts, and flexible funding would be increased at the local level.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 86 UPDATE April 2001

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Washington, DC 20202-0498
Fax: 202-401-0689
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SUBSCRIPTIONS
ED Pubs
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Jessup, MD 20794-1398
1-877-4ED-PUBS
(1-877-433-7827)
edpubs@inet.ed.gov

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Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs
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# 2001 Notable Children's Books

Below are books recommended by the American Library Association for younger readers, or for parents to read with their children.* For a complete listing, visit www.ala.org/alsc/nbook01.html, or call 1-800-545-2433.

***America's Champion Swimmer: Gertrude Ederle***, by David A. Adler
Despite all odds, Ederle's determination to be the first woman to swim the English Channel, twenty-one arduous miles of cold, choppy water, leads to personal triumph and a victory for all womankind.

***Night Worker***, by Kate Banks
Alex visits his father's construction site one night and discovers a world that is as fascinating and mysterious as it is warm and inviting.

***Olivia***, by Ian Falconer
The days of one irrepressible pig are busy from morning to night, as Olivia excels at everything, including wearing people out!

***Iris and Walter***
by Elissa Haden Guest
In four easy-to-read chapters, Iris discovers a new friend and decides that maybe life in the country is not so bad after all.

***Wemberly Worried***
by Kevin Henkes
Wemberly worries about everything, especially about beginning nursery school. Her courage grows with family support and a successful first day.

***Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys***
by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard
Virgie, a spunky young African-American girl living in the post-Civil War South, is determined to join her brothers at the local Quaker school.

***Days Like This: A Collection of Small Poems***, by Simon James
An anthology of brief, expressive poems, traditional and modern, celebrates everyday experiences like jumping on the bed, illustrated with cartoon watercolors outlined in ink.

**The U.S. Department of Education does not endorse particular books, and recommends that families review this list and make their own decision on the suitability of the books for their children.*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- **Empower parents:** Parents would have more information about the quality of their child's school. Students in persistently low-performing schools would be given more options.

The plan would make significant changes in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in areas such as improving academic performance of disadvantaged students, boosting teacher quality, moving limited English proficient students to English fluency, and encouraging safe schools.

The president also proposed dramatic increases in funding for education in his Fiscal Year 2002 budget request. For elementary and secondary education, the Education Department would receive a $1.6 billion increase, and education funding to other federal agencies would grow by $340 million.

The president also proposes almost $1 billion for reading programs and $2.6 billion for states to improve teacher quality and recruitment. He would provide an additional $1 billion for Pell Grants for disadvantaged students seeking financial assistance for higher education.

"Since his first day in office, President Bush has demonstrated his commitment to providing every child in America with access to a quality education at all levels," said Secretary Paige. "The budget blueprint further demonstrates his commitment to America's students."

For up-to-date information on these initiatives, visit the Department's Web site at www.ed.gov, or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327). A copy of *No Child Left Behind* can be downloaded from www.ed.gov/inits/nclb/index.html, or call 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) for a paper publication.



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# Solid Research, Solid Teaching

By G. Reid Lyon, *Bethesda, Maryland*

Teachers frequently tell me that they see little value in basing their teaching practices on the results of "educational research." They point out that the research reports are difficult to understand, frequently do not apply to the specific children they are teaching, and often reflect "turf battles" between academics espousing different research philosophies.

I know firsthand the devastating effect that poor quality research has on teaching practices and the trust teachers have in educational research. As a brand new third-grade teacher in the mid-1970s, I was responsible for teaching 28 students of varying abilities and backgrounds. Unfortunately, many of my students had not yet learned basic reading skills and were clearly floundering in almost every aspect of their academic work.

However, the university courses that I had taken to become certified as an elementary school teacher led me to believe these youngsters would learn to read when they were ready. Likewise, my school's reading curriculum was based on the assumption that learning to read was a natural process, similar to learning to listen and speak. Thus children did not need to be taught basic reading skills in a systematic or direct manner.

At the beginning of the year, a third of my students read so slowly and inaccurately that they could not comprehend what they read. Their spelling was also nothing to write home about. Unfortunately, by the end of the year, these same students continued to read slowly and inaccurately. The only change I could discern was that their motivation to read had waned—they would actually avoid reading—and their self-esteem had suffered considerably. Likewise, I felt like a failure as a teacher.

It wasn't until later in my research career that I learned that the way I was trained to teach reading, and the way that the reading series recommended that literacy concepts should be taught, were based upon research that was questionable at best. Indeed, I came to learn later that the assumptions upon which the instructional philosophy and methods rested had never been adequately tested through well-designed studies.

Today's teachers have a number of resources that can help them discriminate between research that can be trusted and research that cannot be. Now, when almost every reading program and set of instructional materials are said to be "research-based," teachers need to know that many of these products are based upon beliefs and dogma rather than on scientific data.

One such resource is *The Report of the National Panel—An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction,* available free by request at www.nationalreadingpanel.org. The report is published jointly by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). NIFL, a government agency that disseminates evidence-based information on reading, is also developing information and tools specifically for teachers.

All teachers want to do the best for their students. When our children learn, everyone wins. Solid, research-based approaches can help children do just that!

*G. Reid Lyon is a research psychologist and chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development within the National Institutes of Health. In addition to serving as a third-grade classroom teacher, he taught children with learning disabilities and served as a school psychologist for 12 years.*



# Satellite Town Meeting

**Tuesday, April 17**
**8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.**

Schools and school districts are discovering that faith-based and community-serving organizations can be important allies in supporting students' learning. With their shared mission of helping children and families, these groups are assisting schools by providing tutoring and mentoring, safe havens for children, after-school programs and more. Strong partnerships between schools and faith-based and community-serving groups often work best when they are part of a broader collaborative effort that also draws in local agencies, businesses and family organizations.

Secretary Paige's April 17, Satellite Town Meeting will explore ways that schools can:

- Partner with faith-based and community organizations in ways that honor students' religious identity, and thus draw on some of the most important institutions in their lives;
- Respect the diverse beliefs, both sacred and secular, of students and their families; and
- Create partnerships that give various faith-based and neighborhood groups a chance to participate.

To join the Satellite Town Meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit www.ed.gov/satelliteevent. Also, view live or archived Webcasts of the meeting by visiting Apple Computer's Apple Learning Interchange at http://ali.apple.com/events/aliqttv/.

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund and Target Stores.

# Reading by Leaps & Bounds

## *How a Dallas Head Start Program Has Its Children Jumping Ahead*

Few of the four-year-olds entering the Margaret H. Cone Head Start Center have spent time on a parent's lap turning the pages of an open book, listening to an animated voice, and watching a big finger point to the pictures. On language pre-tests, many score on the bottom rung. Yet, by the time they begin kindergarten, graduates of the Cone Center rank at the top of their class on reading and vocabulary assessments.

"There's a big difference between the students we receive from Margaret Cone and those who have not attended the Center," said Francesca Ashbury, chair of the kindergarten department at the local elementary school. "They can sit for long periods of time. They have fine motor skills, such as using scissors and holding pencils. They understand letter-sound association...We find them to be like mentors to their classmates."

The Margaret Cone Center is a collaborative effort founded in 1990 by the Texas Instruments Foundation and Head Start of Greater Dallas, which provides comprehensive services each year to 90 disadvantaged students, most of whom live in the housing project across the street. At the center of the model is a curriculum package called LEAP—for "Language Enrichment Activities Program"—which focuses on building cognitive and language skills in young children, and has the twin task of training teachers and parents, in order to ensure success in kindergarten and beyond.

The Learning Therapy Program at Southern Methodist University developed LEAP in 1993 at the request of Texas Instruments Foundation to remedy lagging student performance. In spite of the health, nutritional and social services the children were receiving, they continued to enter kindergarten performing well below average. "You can't address one part without addressing the other because it all goes together in the development of a child and that child's success," says Lue Alma Sumlin, director of the Center.

The university team observing the children over the next three years designed a program to bring the children up to par. Results were soon apparent: scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills gradually increased from 20–30 median percentiles in 1991–92 to 60–70 percentiles in 1994–95. Last year's scores on a new evaluation, the Stanford 9, continued to be well above the national norms.

### Building Language Skills

LEAP provides a 20-week lesson plan to be used with small groups of children throughout the day. The lessons center on building language in six parts—with stories, words, sounds, letters, ideas, and pre-writing motor skills. By the time they reach kindergarten, the children are able to name the letters of the alphabet, retell a story in their own words, and speak in complete sentences, among other skills.

Each child is assessed at the beginning and end of the program, as part of a comprehensive evaluation plan; parents are given pre- and post-surveys; and the progress of children in the local public school system is tracked.

Teachers must participate in a one-day workshop before joining the program, in which they practice teaching parts of the lesson with an educator from the Center. In addition, trained

Photography by Glen Ellman

*Director Lue Alma Sumlin.*

volunteers go to the classroom each week and serve as model teachers. Additional funds from the Texas Instruments Foundation help keep a full-time nurse practitioner and two full-time social workers on staff.

## Easing Transitions

Helping children make the transition to kindergarten also includes partnering with the neighborhood elementary school that they will eventually attend.

In 1996, the Cone Center began "vertical teaming" with Julius C. Frazier Elementary when Principal Rachael George was brought on board. They meet every three months, but communicate often, to discuss what Frazier expects their incoming students to know. The children also are brought over once a year for a tour of Frazier and lunch with the other students, as part of the plan to acclimate them early to elementary school life.

Only a block away, former students who Sumlin says are as tall as she is now return to Cone quite often to update the teachers on their progress, showing Honor Roll certificates and trophies from the Spelling Bee. She adds, "The parents come back, saying, 'I just want to thank you all for what you did for my child and me.'"

## Learning at Home

Bridging the gap between potential and achieving readers, Ashbury points out, can only be as effective as the level of parent participation.

"If you're at home, and you're not made to read anything or to ever pick up a book or a pencil, you just kind of lose interest," she says. "It's not important to you because you can do everything else and don't have to read."

The Margaret Cone Head Start Center prepares parents to be their child's first educator by providing a number of parent involvement activities that factor in a daily time for reading.

"Sometimes it's just not understanding the role of a parent and what raising a child is about," explains Sumlin about the need for parenting classes. "Sometimes a lack of positive role models from their own parents affects the way they parent their children." Reading to a child from infancy, she says, is the best introduction to language and a wonderful bonding activity for the parent and child.

An especially promising initiative has been a six-week employment program at the Center for parents, many of whom are single mothers in their teens or early 20s.

Olistha Mullins, a mother of two who volunteers at the Center, said that as a result of working with the children she now has her sights set on teaching. "With me having kids, I was kind of negative about myself, meaning that I didn't want to go back to school," she explained. "And now I'm pushed to learn more because I feel like I have something that I can offer other kids and parents as well."

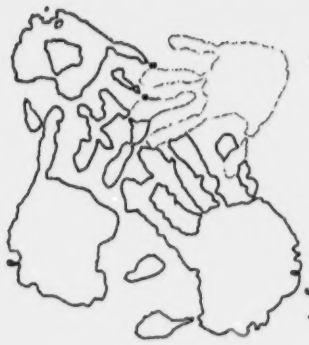
Regularly scheduled workshops provide information on the development of pre-reading skills and language enrichment. The workshops, which Mullins says taught her "how to adjust" to her daughter's learning, allow one-on-one interaction with teachers and support staff for guidance. "Being with the teachers is like having a second family," says Mullins.

To encourage more reading in the home, the Center has a collection of videotapes on how to teach children at home, a "Read to Me" contest, and a lending library. Mullins, who reads to her daughter every night, quite often checks out Zaria's favorite book *The Three Little Bears*. She muses, "Now she's more like wanting to read to me."

To learn more about the Margaret H. Cone Head Start Center in Dallas and the Language Enrichment Activities Program, visit the Web site for the Texas Instruments Foundation at www.ti.com/corp/docs/company/citizen/foundation/leapsbounds/learning.shtml, or call Ann Minnis, grants director, at 972-917-4505.

Photography by Glen Ellman

*Olistha Mullins reads with daughter Zaria.*



# PARTNERSHIP
## *for Family Involvement in Education*

***A coalition of more than 7,100 business, community, religious and education organizations nationwide. To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.***

# PBS Series *Between The Lions* Launches Second Season

*Program Helps Young Children Boost Reading Skills, Study Suggests*

Television is often thought to be the enemy of reading, and certainly mothers and fathers need to carefully monitor their children's TV watching. But thoughtful, well-produced television programming can support parents' and teachers' efforts to create strong reading skills in young children.

One example is *Between the Lions*, broadcast daily by Public Broadcasting System (PBS) member stations as part of its "Ready To Learn" service for young children. This month *Between the Lions* begins its second season with 25 new episodes and introduces a new character, Gus the Rabbit. Created at the request of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, Gus will touch children who have difficulty reading, whatever the cause. Because Gus is successful in every way—except in learning to read—the character shows children that there is no shame in struggling to read and that help is available.

A recent study commissioned by PBS and conducted by the University of Kansas showed that beginning readers benefit from watching *Between the Lions*. Watching just 8.5 hours significantly raised the reading skills and scores of kindergartners, according to the study. The same research also showed that beginning readers enjoyed watching the program, with one in six calling it their favorite television show. PBS reports that *Between the Lions* is watched by some 56 million children.

Sixteen national organizations committed to literacy and early childhood education work with PBS as part of the *Between the Lions'* outreach initiative. The organizations, which include the American Library Association, the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., the International Reading Association and Reading is Fundamental, carry out a variety of projects. The organizations also disseminate information about the *Between the Lions* Designated Reader campaign to educators, literacy professionals, librarians and families.

With Ready To Learn, PBS and its member stations support efforts to prepare children for school success in a variety of ways, including offering on-air and online programming on specific educational goals; creating interactive online resources for children and caregivers; and presenting community outreach and educational materials for families and local organizations. PBS has been a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement since 1998, and the Ready to Learn Service is funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

To find out more about Ready To Learn, visit www.pbskids.org/grownups/readytolearn. Children's games and stories based on *Between the Lions* are available at www.pbskids.org/lions.

*Theo the head librarian reads to son Lionel and Lionel's friend, Gus.*



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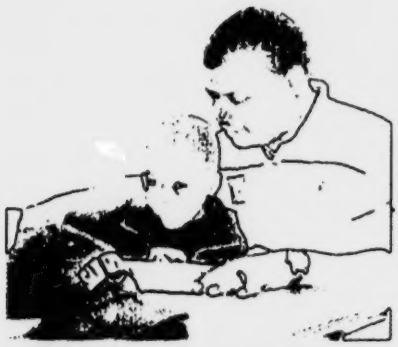
# ABOUT our PARTNERS

*A Roundup of Recent Activities*



*Father and son work together during a workshop by the Center for Successful Fathering.*

**Center for Successful Fathering**
Picking a quiet place to read, playing phonics games, and "making stories interesting by making faces and different voices for characters" were among the suggestions elementary school students presented to their fathers as ways to engage them in reading during a workshop conducted by the Center for Successful Fathering (CSF). "When fathers enter the imaginative literary world by playing and acting out characters, they become emotionally accessible to their children and better connected to their education," says Executive Director Alphonso Rincón. Since 1997, CSF has provided training and technical assistance through its curriculum, "Accepting the Challenges of Fatherhood," to schools across Texas. For more information, visit www.fathering.org, or call 1-800-537-0853.

**Center for the Improvement of Child Caring**
The Center for the Improvement of Child Caring (CICC) in Los Angeles County recently received grants totaling $5.4 million over three years from the local Proposition 10 Commission, which funnels tobacco tax funds into improving early childhood development. The county has one of California's largest populations of children from infants to 5 years old. In addition to offering culturally specific parenting classes including "Los Niños Bien Educados" and "Effective Black Parenting," the Center prepares childcare personnel at numerous sites to train parents as their child's first educators. Because parents entrust their children to caregivers, said CICC Founder Kerby Alvy, "they are perfect for advocating to parents how to be more effective in raising their kids and creating homes that are school ready." For more information about CICC and its parent training materials, visit www.ciccparenting.org, or call 1-800-325-2422.

**National Jewish Coalition for Literacy**
The National Jewish Coalition for Literacy (NJCL) and its Los Angeles affiliate Koreh L.A. recently completed a recruitment drive for reading volunteers among local synagogues and Jewish organizations in the Los Angeles area. More than 1,000 volunteers signed up to read with students in grades K–3 at 55 public schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. "People want to help. You just have to make it easy on them by offering a program that makes them feel good about the time they are donating," says NJCL Director Craig Sumberg. For more information about NJCL's efforts nationwide, visit www.njcl.net, or call 212-545-9215.

**Pizza Hut®**
Approximately 1.5 million children in 30,000 childcare centers across the country are participating in an early reading initiative sponsored by Pizza Hut® called "BOOK IT! Beginners®." The two-month program encourages teachers and parents to read aloud to young children to begin a lifelong love of reading. When these pre-schoolers enter elementary school, they can join the BOOK IT!® program, a reading incentive effort for grades K–6. Children in both programs receive a certificate for a Personal Pan Pizza® when they reach their reading goals. For information on enrollment in the BOOK IT!® program—available free of charge to schools and licensed childcare facilities—visit www.bookitprogram.com, or call 1-800-4-BOOKIT.

# CALENDAR

**April 18–21**, Washington, D.C.
*Children's Defense Fund's Annual National Conference "Leave No Child Behind: Transforming the World for Children."* Call 1-800-CDF-1200 and select option #3, or visit www.childrensdefense.org/activitypage.htm.

**May 10–11**, Washington, D.C.
*Business and Education 2001 Conference: "Leveraging Technology—A Call to Action."* Call The Conference Board at 212-339-0345, or visit www.conference-board.org/b&e.htm.

**May 31–June 1**, Westborough, Mass.
*Massachusetts Parent Involvement Project 2001 Conference/Showcase.* Call Patrice Garvin at 617-695-9771, or e-mail pgarvin@mits.org.

**June 7–8**, Washington, D.C.
*The National Fatherhood Initiative's Fourth Annual Summit on Fatherhood: "Broadening the Reach."* Call 301-948-0599, or visit www.fatherhood.org/summit.htm.

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*

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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 86 | UPDATE | April 2001

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FIRST CLASS

IN THIS ISSUE:

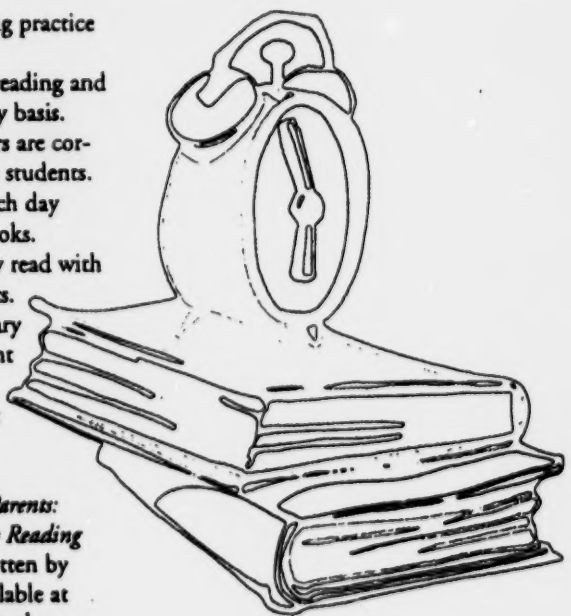
Reading by Leaps & Bounds

PAGE 4

# Marks of a Good Early Reading Program

Children with rich literacy experiences are much more likely to start school ready to read. Preschool programs that focus on building skills such as letter recognition, vocabulary use, and sound awareness prepare a child for kindergarten and for later school success. Below are a few tips that define a quality early reading program.

- Every teacher is excited about reading and promotes the value and fun of reading to students.
- All students are carefully evaluated, beginning in kindergarten, to see what they know and what they need to become good readers.
- Reading instruction and practice last 90 minutes or more a day in first, second and third grades and 60 minutes a day in kindergarten.
- Students have daily spelling practice and weekly spelling tests.
- The connection between reading and writing is taught on a daily basis. Students write daily. Papers are corrected and returned to the students.
- All students are read to each day from different kinds of books. Students discuss what they read with teachers and other students.
- Every classroom has a library of books that children want to read. This includes easy books and books that are more difficult.



The full text of *A Guide for Parents: How Do I Know a Good Early Reading Program When I See One?*, written by First Lady Laura Bush, is available at www.ed.gov/inits/rrrl/guide.html, or call 1-877-4ED-PUBS for a copy.

U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 87 | U P D A T E | May 2001

*"Learning with technology is a priority, because it is what society expects of our children."*

*Dan Leslie, superintendent of the Sabine Parish School System*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

## Education Gets Major Boost in Funding

*Department Receives Largest Increase of Any Domestic Agency in President's Budget Request*

President Bush's first budget request delivered to Congress last month calls for an 11.5 percent increase in federal funding for the Department of Education, which would inject an additional $4.6 billion into the Department for fiscal year 2002.

"Since his first day in office, President Bush has demonstrated his commitment to providing every child in America with access to a quality education at all levels," said U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige. "He has made 'No Child Left Behind' his number one legislative priority and his number one domestic budget priority."

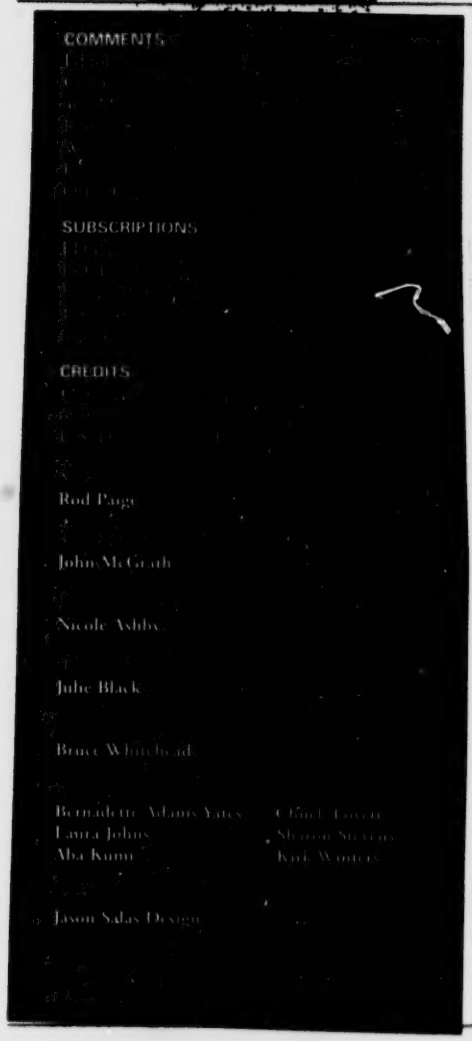
Combined with a rigorous accountability system and increased flexibility, the president's increased funding for public education will provide much-needed assistance for disadvantaged students and includes major increases in several programs:

- $1 billion more for special education grants to states to provide assistance to students with disabilities;
- $1 billion more for Pell Grants to provide disadvantaged students with financial assistance for higher education;
- $614 million more for Reading First state grants to ensure that every U.S. child can read;
- $459 million more for Title I grants to Local Education Agencies to assist low-performing schools and disadvantaged students;
- $375 million more for state grants for improving teacher quality;
- $320 million to help states develop and implement annual state reading and math assessments to measure the performance of all students every year in grades 3–8;



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 87 UPDATE May 2001




# Parents Encouraging Information Literacy

With the increasing use of the Internet by students of all ages, the following tips adapted from the recommendations of Educational Resources Information Center are useful to parents for teaching their children how to effectively use information from the Web:

**Encourage and guide your children in exploring their interests.** Point them to various resources—such as printed materials, videos, and computers—that they can use to find out about the things that interest them.

**Use "The Big Six" to help your children with their homework.** Help them (1) determine what is expected from their homework assignments, (2) identify the necessary resources for the tasks, (3) locate the needed resources, (4) read or use the information, (5) apply the information to the tasks, and (6) evaluate the quality of their final product.

**Show your children how to evaluate information.** Teach them to ask the following questions: Who or what is the authority? How current is the information? How might different people perceive this message? What is omitted?

**Teach your children about authors.** Point out the authors of the books they read. Explain to them that they must acknowledge other people's ideas, and show them how to document their sources.

**Instruct your children to consider the reliability of information from the Internet.** Explain to them that anyone can put information on the Internet. Teach them to look for the author's qualifications and sources. Ask them to consider whether the information on a Web site is being used to sell a product.

**Discuss information literacy with your children's teachers.** Ask them how they encourage information literacy and what you can do to help.

For more information about teaching information literacy, visit www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/infoltrcy.html. To order print copies of the most recent titles, call 1-800-LET-ERIC (1-800-538-3742).

# New Reading Program

Next month, the U.S. Department of Education kicks off "Summer Book Links," a program with fun reading and writing activities to encourage students to read over the summer. Students who read every day for six weeks with the help of families and volunteers receive a free Pizza Hut® coupon. Starting June 15, download Summer Book Links from www.ed.gov/pubs/compactforreading, or order one copy and a coupon from 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) while supplies last.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- $175 million for a new Charter School Homestead Fund to expand parental options; and
- $137 million more for public school buildings on military bases and Native American lands.

In addition to these increases in Department of Education funding, the president will provide other federal agencies with a $490 million increase to support their initiatives related to his education reform agenda. The president's budget also supports education through innovative tax exemptions and other nondiscretionary investments in education. Both houses of Congress have passed budget resolutions that closely reflect the president's budget priorities.

For the latest news of Department of Education funding and a state-by-state analysis of proposed allocations, visit www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/budget.html, or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).





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# Tips for Technology Success

**By Bruce Whitehead, *Missoula, Montana***

I remember vividly my days as an elementary school principal trying to get my technology program off the ground. I also remember trying desperately to get reluctant staff members to accept and use networked computers in their classrooms, as well as find the dollars to fund the program.

Through trial and error—actually more error than trial—I learned hard and fast lessons that I call "The Seven Golden Nuggets." These are tips I developed during planning and implementation of a program that helped my school, Hellgate Elementary in Missoula, Montana, become a National Blue Ribbon School and a national demonstration site for the effective use of classroom technology.

The first lesson is that technology should not drive curriculum but just the opposite—curriculum should drive technology. We work to make technology transparent and fit our existing curriculum, in which teachers use computers, LCD projectors, scanners, and other technology, much like they would an overhead or VCR.

Second, I came to realize that the key to using technology successfully is the teacher. Only teachers can make technology happen effectively in the classroom.

Third, I find that money follows success. Our district makes technology a major funding priority and has technology as a line item in our budget, which represents at least 5 percent of the general fund. This provides a stable source of revenue for technology each year and helps to ensure success.

Fourth, I decided to put at least five high-speed networked computers with a printer in each classroom, and more if necessary to achieve a student-computer ratio of 5-to-1. This enhances a cooperative learning environment for each classroom, where students and teachers have access to computers and the Internet all day.

Fifth, I formulate strategies on how to reach the "reluctants"—those teachers having difficulty fully integrating technology into their classrooms. I now use a mentor program, whereby I pair a teacher having difficulty in using technology with a master technology teacher. I send both, as a team, to conferences and schedule their prep periods together in order for them to practice computer applications. I believe in providing staff development via "teachers teaching teachers" and in using a combination of student early outs, rotation of substitute teachers, and extended teacher contracts to build in time for professional development.

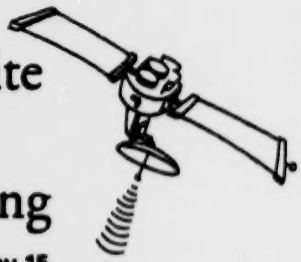
Sixth, I find that it is easy to measure and evaluate success with technology by monitoring the amount and quality of student writing; enhancement of cooperative learning; awareness of student learning styles; application of student technical tutoring; and the level of e-mail communication among teachers, parents and administrators.

Finally, I have found that an effective public relations program develops community awareness. When parents and community leaders understand why classroom technology is so important to the future of their children, they are more willing to support it.

If these golden nuggets can work for a rural school in Montana like ours, they can work for just about any school across the country.

*Bruce Whitehead is the principal of Hellgate Intermediate School and an associate professor at the University of Montana. He designed and implemented a model for classroom technology centers that earned him the National Distinguished Principals Award from the National Association of Elementary School Principals.*

# Satellite Town Meeting



**Tuesday, May 15**
**8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.**

School and community leaders agree that today's education technologies have great potential to improve academic achievement. A broad range of technologies, including the World Wide Web, e-mail, and distance learning, can be especially powerful tools for helping disadvantaged and under-served students connect with new learning resources.

Secretary Paige's May 15 *Satellite Town Meeting* will be entitled "Enhancing Education Through Technology: New Tools to Close the Achievement Gap." A panel of school and community leaders will explore questions such as:

- How can today's educational technologies help all students, including disadvantaged students, meet high academic standards?
- How can teachers be well prepared to learn and use new educational technologies?
- How can schools and communities create comprehensive technology plans to improve student achievement?
- What resources are available to schools and communities to support their educational technology needs?

To join the Satellite Town Meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit www.ed.gov/satelliteevent. Also, view live or archived Webcasts of the meeting by visiting Apple Computer's Apple Learning Interchange at http://ali.apple.com/events/aliqttv/.

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund and Target Stores.



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# Just a Click Away

## *Technology Connects a Rural Louisiana School District to the Rest of the World*

BY NICOLE ASHBY

In the rural parish of Sabine, Louisiana—where the timber mill is the largest employer and the nearest major city, Houston, Texas, is three and a half hours away—technology is enabling the school system to do more with less.

Although the district has no Latin teacher, for instance, high school students are studying Latin online through a distance learning program. Elementary school children are discovering fun facts and figures about the weather on Web pages located by their teachers, comparing temperatures in their region to those of other schools across the country through an electronic pen-pal program.

"The computer is just one of the tools we use to turn the kids on to learning," says Ross Williams, head of the technology effort for the Sabine Parish School System. "And now with instructional software, the Internet and teacher training, it is an expected part of the instruction."

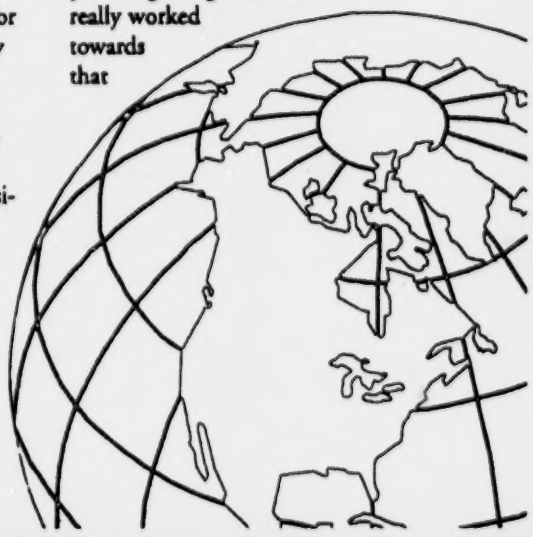
In 1996, Sabine (pronounced Sabeen) began wiring its 12 schools thanks to several federal grants that allowed the district to install local area networks at each school and dedicated telephone lines for Internet service. Through a number of additional public and private resources, Sabine provides every six students access to at least one computer, a supply it is hoping to increase until the ratio is one to one.

Unlike a larger or urban district, which would have more opportunities to build community partnerships, Sabine does not have many business contributions for its technology initiative. Also, timber and tourism, not technology, are the area's primary industries. Yet Superintendent Dan Leslie has not settled for this excuse. "Once you set your priorities, you'll find the money," he counters. "And learning with technology is a priority, because it is what society expects of our children."

Approximately 63 percent of Sabine's 4,200 students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, but only half of them have access to a home computer. Closing the digital divide between those students plugged into the Internet at home and those who are not, Williams says, is the responsibility of the education system. He says providing adequate computer access should run along side other school services such as health and nutritional care.

So far, Sabine has connected 85 percent of its classrooms to the Internet and boasts one of the most extensive Web sites in the state, with over 3,000 educational links. "The Internet has shrunk our world considerably by boosting access to information," says Williams, "allowing students to further explore subjects that a textbook cannot."

However, the impact technology has on student progress, Williams points out, can only be rightly measured when there is "continuity from class to class, grade to grade, school to school, when everyone has truly come on board." Test scores and student attendance recently improved at Zwolle, an elementary school in the American Indian community, "because the teachers, administrators and parents got together and really worked towards that



*Cathy Rankin enters one of the students in her online computer science course.*

success, and technology was certainly a part of that effort," Williams adds.

## Technology Licenses

Equally critical to supplying every classroom with Internet-connected computers is ensuring that every teacher is trained to use them well.

Through a 56-hour training program called "InTech," Sabine's teachers learn how to integrate technology into their lessons as well as how to use basic computer applications. The school district was one of the first sites to implement the state's professional development program, which is centered on Louisiana's content standards. At least three teachers from the same school are required to sign up together to help build a support system of trained staff. At some schools, more than 70 percent of the teachers have gone through the training. Bell South's "Power to Teach" grant will help train an additional 50 of the 330 teachers in the district.

Teachers receive a "technology license" after passing a proficiency assessment that entitles them to a new classroom computer equipped with a printer and several software packages. They are given a network account and an e-mail address along with a dial-up connection that enables them to access their files from home.

Sabine's Technology Learning Center, a 12-station lab located at the district's headquarters, also serves as a host site for InTech training. Equipped with scanners and projection devices, the lab is open to the community and provides free classes every Wednesday.

Williams says bringing everybody on board also includes leadership training. With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, "LEADTech" is a two-year program that teaches principals to support their school improvement efforts through the use of instructional technology. Four of Sabine's 12 principals are now in the program.

This summer, Sabine will begin camps for students interested in learning about computers, who will then support their school's technology coordinator during the school year.

## A New Style of Teaching

Williams admits that it will take some time for teachers to feel comfortable with technology in the classroom because they are learning not only a new medium but a new style of teaching, which he equates with being the "guide on the side versus the sage on the stage."

Cathy Rankin, who teaches an online computer science course, says this brand of teaching gives students, particularly in the distance learning program, greater ownership of their learning. "Many of the students who would not excel in a classroom do very well here," she says. "They can do more because they don't have to worry about appearing to be foolish in front of someone else."

Alicia Holland, a senior at Many High taking an online art history course, agrees. "I like the different way of learning, being out of a classroom and doing it on my own." Holland says another benefit of online learning is the flexibility that allows her to work at her own pace.

Approximately 35 students in Sabine are involved in the Louisiana Virtual Classroom Pilot Project. The statewide program offers Sabine students 11 courses, ranging from Conceptual Physics to Spanish. Some students are taking an online course as an extra class, doing it entirely from home.

Communication among students and teachers is facilitated through e-mail and a discussion board, which is a public arena for messages and class announcements. A student having trouble solving a problem, for example, can post a query to the discussion board to enlist help from fellow students. In addition, the teacher is always available by phone.

Rankin says that although more time is required because "everything has to be very well planned and very well published for the kids to get access to it," the virtual classroom allows her more time with the students.

"I feel like when I'm online, I'm really able to teach again," she says. "There are no interruptions. Everybody has an opportunity to ask a question and I have the opportunity to respond. No one gets left out. And that's a good feeling as a teacher."

*Alicia Holland (right) and classmates search the Internet for a class project.*

For more information about the technology initiatives in the Sabine Parish School System, contact its technology director, Ross Williams, at 318-256-9228 or at ross@radar.sabine.k12.la.us. Also, visit Sabine's Web site at www.sabine.k12.la.us.

PARTNERSHIP
*for Family Involvement in Education*

***A coalition of more than 7,200 education, community, religious and business organizations nationwide. To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.***

# Nation's Newspaper Reaches Classrooms through Technology

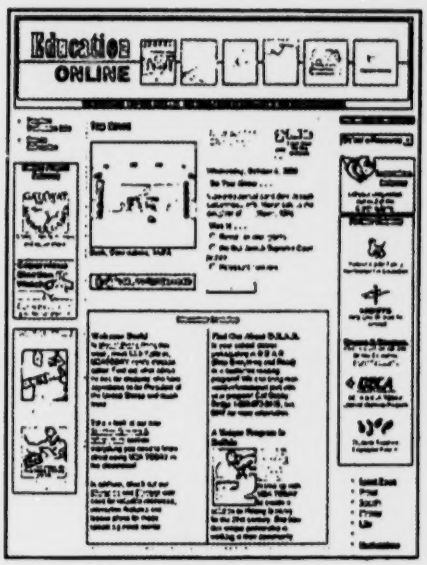
*USA TODAY*, a strong supporter of education since the paper was founded in 1982, helps students better understand the people, places and events that impact their lives by connecting them to each day's news in a colorful and engaging way.

According to Nancy Welday, chair of the language arts department at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School in Florida, "*USA TODAY* has brought the world into our classrooms. The activities and curriculum have been invaluable teaching tools for promoting learning and literacy."

A member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE) since 1997, *USA TODAY* is able to deliver timely news around the world because of technology. The newspaper is published via satellite at 33 locations in the United States and at four international sites. Each day more than one million readers visit *USA TODAY's* Web site.

The education section of the site—at http://education.usatoday.com—provides parents and educators with access to a daily lesson plan called "Experience TODAY." The lesson plan is available each evening prior to the newspaper's publication, which lets teachers know what's going to be in the next day's paper before it goes to press.

Experience TODAY activities use graphics and editorial features from each day's news that can be integrated into all curricular areas for students in grades 6–12. Key features of the lesson plan include discussion questions based on major newsbreaking stories; critical thinking questions about topics such as technology, leadership, diversity and self-esteem; and activities to help students talk about the news with their parents.




*http://education.usatoday.com*

The lesson plan has proven to have significant effects in the classroom. In one instance, a Florida teacher used the *USA TODAY* article about the Santana High School shooting to discuss whether or not it would be acceptable to break a confidence shared by a peer. As a result of that discussion, a student decided to inform the teacher that a friend intended to commit suicide. The school intervened in time and was able to avoid a possible tragedy. In a letter thanking the newspaper, the teacher wrote that the use of *USA TODAY's* activity "perhaps even saved a student's life."

Recent additions to the Web site have included "Career Quest" worksheets and "Education Roundup," which provides links to interactive resources for timely events, such as in-depth coverage of Census 2000 and the Olympics.

At the college level, *USA TODAY* was instrumental in starting the "Newspaper Readership Program," supplying *USA TODAY* and a selection of other newspapers to designated campuses across the country each morning. This summer, academic resources for college professors will also be available through the program.

*USA TODAY* also hosts PFIE's own Web site at http://pfie.ed.gov. For additional information about *USA TODAY* education programs, call 1-800-757-TEACH.

***The U.S. Department of Education does not mandate or prescribe particular curricula or lesson plans. The information in this article is provided only as a resource that educators may find helpful.***



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# ABOUT our SCHOOLS

*A Roundup of Recent Activities*

*Students in Newport News, Va., use wireless technology in their reading program.*

**Newport News Public Schools**
Newport News Public Schools in Virginia recently launched a wireless network that enables elementary school students to use wireless devices to gather data for remote, on-site research. Eight elementary schools in Newport News are currently equipped with this technology, and by the end of next year, all of its 28 elementary schools will be connected. "The program allows us to move technology out of the corner and into direct instruction," says Newsome Park School principal Pete Bender. For more information on Newport News' technology program, call 757-881-5061 extension 100, or visit www.sbo.nn.k12.va.us.

**SAS Institute**
In March, SAS in School—a division of SAS Institute and the Carolina Biological Supply Company—issued software for use with traditional lab activities in secondary science classes. SAS Institute develops K–12 educational technologies, multimedia instructional software, assessment tools and research services. Mark Nielson, technology director for the CIS Academy in Durham, North Carolina, says that "watching our students connect to poetry, science and math has been a joy." For more information, call 919-677-8000, or visit www.SASinschool.com.

**Scholastic.com**
Scholastic.com—a one-stop shop for thousands of free lesson plans, online activities, and professional development and classroom management resources—features a new "Class Homepage Builder" tool that helps teachers create their own Web pages to foster school-to-home communications. For more information, call 1-800-SCHOLASTIC (1-800-724-6527), or visit www.scholastic.com.

*Teachers exchange ideas in a Learning Network workshop.*

**Learning Network**
Free monthly e-mail newsletters, professional development workshops, and online gradebook services for educators are now available from the Learning Network. The network seeks to bridge the connection between schools and families of students in grades K–12. For more information, call 1-800-816-1999, or visit www.learningnetwork.com.

## CALENDAR

**May 8–10**, Atlantic City, N.J. *"Fostering Careers In Law, Public Safety and Security."* Call Partners in Education at 703-836-4880, or e-mail Joe Coffee at jcoffee@napehq.org.

**May 10–11**, Washington D.C. *Business and Education 2001 Conference: "Leveraging Technology—A Call to Action."* Call The Conference Board at 212-339-0345, or visit www.conference-board.org/b&e.htm.

**May 31–June 1**, Westborough, Mass. *Massachusetts Parent Involvement Project 2001 Conference/Showcase.* Call Patrice Garvin at 617-695-9771, or e-mail pgarvin@mits.org.

**June 7–8**, Washington, D.C. *National Fatherhood Initiative's Fourth Annual Summit on Fatherhood: "Broadening the Reach."* Call 301-948-0599, or visit www.fatherhood.org/summit.htm.

**June 28–July 1**, Minneapolis, Minn. *Points of Light Foundation 2001 National Conference: "Community Volunteering and National Service."* Call TuNia Slade at 202-729-3220, or e-mail registration@pointsoflight.org.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The National Institute for Literacy has just issued two reports and a video entitled *Teaching Children to Read.* Presenting research-based reading instruction, the materials are from a study conducted by the National Reading Panel. For a copy, while supplies last, call 1-800-370-2943, or visit www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/publications.htm.

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*



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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 87 | UPDATE | May 2001

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FIRST CLASS

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Just a Click Away**

PAGE 4

# Spinning a Web of Education Resources

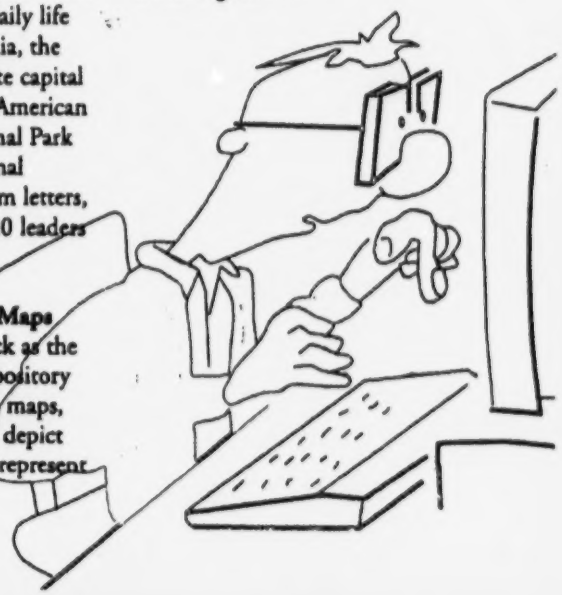
According to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics, more than half of today's students say they use the Internet on a regular basis to do research for school. At www.ed.gov/free—a gateway to thousands of education resources from federal agencies—students can access primary source documents, such as a revised draft of FDR's speech to Congress declaring the country's involvement in World War II. Below is a sample of the newest resources at the FREE Web site:

**Explore Themes in American Art,** provided by the National Gallery of Art, looks at 10 genres of American art: abstraction, the figure, historical subjects, landscape painting, marine painting, portraiture, narrative art, scenes from everyday life, still life, and topographical views. Illustrated essays, images, featured artists and references are offered for each genre.

**So You Want to Learn About the Civil War?** offers a portrayal of the daily life of soldiers at Petersburg, Virginia, the supply center to the Confederate capital and site of the longest siege in American warfare. Provided by the National Park Service at the Petersburg National Battlefield, photos, excerpts from letters, and biographies of more than 20 leaders explore this segment of history.

**The Luso-Hispanic World in Maps** includes maps created as far back as the early 16th century, from the repository of the Library of Congress. The maps, most of which are hand drawn, depict portions of five continents and represent different national and political interests and perspectives.

To access these and other resources, go to the "new resources" link at www.ed.gov/free.





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*U.S. Department of Education*

# COMMUNITY

*Issue No. 88* | U P D A T E | *June/July 2001*

*"If you get to the place where you don't think you're accountable... then you're in the wrong field."*

*Sylvia Spratley, principal of Tidewater Park Elementary School*

**FULL STORY ON PAGE 4**

## Testing: A Tool for Closing the Achievement Gap

*"Tests tell us which kids need extra help," says Secretary Paige.*

*U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige recently spoke to the Education Writers Association about testing. Here is an excerpt from those remarks:*

...While there are pockets of excellence all around America, due in great part to the hard work of dedicated teachers, there are still children in America who are being left behind...

Fewer than a third of our fourth graders can read proficiently at grade level. Based on National Assessment of Educational Progress data, nearly 70 percent of inner-city and rural fourth graders cannot read at even a basic level. Nearly a third of our college freshmen must take remedial courses...

The achievement gap between our disadvantaged and minority students and their more advantaged peers is real. And as the numbers illustrate, it is persistent. It is those students who are being left behind by our system.

President Bush has made closing the achievement gap his goal...A key component to our success in closing the achievement gap in Texas was testing...But I know testing is a very broad term, and that's why I want to focus on it today. It means different things to different people. If I asked five of you what is interesting about testing, you would give me five different answers.

There are good tests and bad tests, there are also many uses for tests. I know this. So I need to emphasize that we are talking about achievement tests that are aligned with standards, objectives, and curriculum and that are used to measure and understand progress toward mastery of those standards. These tests are the best tool we have for discovering which schools, and which methods, are succeeding, and also for doing the same for each child.

At the community level, tests of student achievement help us to define suc-



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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY UPDATE
Issue No. 88 June/July 2001

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Jessup, MD 20794
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CREDITS
*Community Update* is published by the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

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# Computer Profile Gives Teachers a New Tool

In the Houston Independent School District, teachers can take a closer look at the academic strengths and weaknesses of their students with an online tool that reports performance on national and state assessments. A biology high school teacher, for example, can pull up data on a computer and locate what percentage of her students answered incorrectly those questions tied to "acquiring and organizing scientific data," one of the science objectives they must master.

With a new computerized system developed by Houston, educators can use a wide range of performance data to pinpoint effective ways to improve student achievement. Currently used by 75 of 330 schools in the district, the student profile system combines individual student demographics with results from several tests: the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, Stanford-9, and Aprenda 2 achievement tests.

"One test is only a snapshot of student progress," says Mark Shenker, who works on instructional technology for the southwestern section of the district. "The profile system is an eye-opener for a lot of teachers because it reveals a pattern of academic behavior over years, which helps teachers target those areas for improvement."

With a 40-percent mobility rate among students, the largest public school system in Texas needed a dynamic system that could provide up-to-date information on student populations at each school location and in each classroom. In 1999, Houston's information and technology department, along with principals across the district, partnered with the community to develop an in-house system. The program is available through Microsoft Access on the district's network.

Before the "profiler" package was developed, school administrators and teachers would spend hours analyzing lists of handwritten student scores. Now, data is categorized by individual student achievement against state objectives as well as by class performance. Through training provided by the district, teachers learn to interpret the aggregation of data and eventually filter the numbers into a plan for addressing any student's remedial needs.

For more information, e-mail studentachievement@houstonisd.org.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

cess in terms of student performance—not spending. To focus on the outputs of our system, not the inputs. At the classroom level, testing also helps teachers. Tests tell us which kids need extra help, and what kind of help fits each child. And at the level of the child, test results also give parents information and control over their children's education. Some parents don't even know their children's schools are failing. Some parents don't even know their children are failing.

Tests help us give each child an academic identity…

The president's plan calls specifically for disaggregation of state test data, and requires states to measure progress in closing the achievement gap as one of the criteria for statewide success…

I will have a big role in following up with states. I will ensure that their testing and accountability plans will measure every student against high standards, and we will hold schools accountable for the results…

For decades, we have determined success based on dollars, not scores…When I was superintendent in Houston, we measured success through student performance, not more money for the system. In Washington, D.C., right now, there is support for education funding in all quarters. But the reform is more important. If money alone were the answer, our problems would have been solved 20 years ago. If more money were the answer, children of all races would be reading and doing math at or above grade level…

The achievement gap is real. We cannot close our eyes to our problems. There is too much at stake. We must all work together to ensure that no child is left behind…

*For a full text of these remarks, visit www.ed.gov/Speeches.*



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# Good Enough—Isn't

**By Norman Higgins, *Dover-Foxcroft, Maine***

"My teachers don't believe I can learn," Mickey explained during an inquiry by the Maine Commission on the Common Core of Learning. The other 19 student participants then turned to me—their high school principal—for a response. Twenty years of experience as a teacher and principal had not prepared me to respond to an indictment of our school that all of us at that moment intuitively knew to be true.

Our school, Piscataquis Community High, is located in the rural Appalachian Highlands of Maine. The school had a historical pattern of low academic performance, which the community accepted. The students scored in the lowest 10 percent on all academic areas of Maine's Educational Assessments. The dropout rate exceeded the state average and postsecondary acceptance rates were half the norm. But what could you expect of students who lived in the state's poorest county and attended a school with one of the lowest per-pupil expenditures in the state?

A few weeks after hearing Mickey's words, I asked six veteran teachers to join me in redesigning our school. Our goal was to ensure that those words would never be repeated.

After months of engagement with the community, parents, staff and students, a basic principle was apparent: all students should have equitable access to a demanding standards-based curriculum. We believed that higher expectations would lead to increased academic achievement, resulting in higher levels of aspiration. The past would no longer be an excuse for poor performance.

The foundation for our standards-based design was a common core of learning for all students in an untracked classroom environment. Algebra, chemistry, biology and physics were required for everyone. Foreign language, the arts, history, citizenship and four years of classical literature also were requirements.

Learning in every classroom became centered on inquiry and cooperation. Individual learning styles, aptitudes and abilities were recognized and incorporated into the classroom experiences. We witnessed the transformation of a traditional learning environment designed for the success of a *few* students into a culture that held high expectations for *all* students.

The results exceeded our expectations. Performance on the Maine Educational Assessments skyrocketed to the top 10 percent. Reading scores were first in the state in 1997 and again in 1998 when science was also top-rated. Cynics assumed the academic performance resulted from increased dropouts who could not perform at higher levels, yet in 1997 the state recognized us for reducing the dropout rate for four consecutive years—the same years that our standards-based curriculum was implemented!

I am often asked if standards make a difference. While data can be convincing, I usually share a personal experience that illustrates the transformation of Mickey's school. A student speaker at a school assembly captured our experience with these words: "I'm a special education student. Even though my dad doesn't think I'm very smart, I'm going to college next year." She hesitated and continued, "Because my teachers believe I can learn." At that moment I knew that our standards-based journey was making a profound difference in the lives of our students during their high school years and beyond.

*Norman Higgins has been a public school educator for 32 years in Maine. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Council for Basic Education and is the current director of the Center for Inquiry for Secondary Education at the Maine Department of Education.*

# Satellite Town Meeting

**Tuesday, June 19**
**8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.**

Across the nation, schools and communities are learning that one critical way to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers is to insist on high standards for all. When all the essential elements of the school—including instruction, curricula and professional development—are aligned with those high standards, students have their best opportunity to achieve. And when tests measure student progress in the essential knowledge and skills established by the standards, teachers, parents and policymakers have the information they need to ensure that children can reach academic success.

"High Standards and Accountability: Helping All Students Achieve" will be the topic of Secretary Paige's next Satellite Town Meeting on June 19. To join the Satellite Town Meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit www.ed.gov/satelliteevent. Also, view live or archived Webcasts of the meeting by visiting Apple Computer's Apple Learning Interchange at http://ali.apple.com/events/aliqttv/.

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund and Target Stores.

## Correction

**Please note:** A story in the April issue on the Margaret Cone Head Start Center inadvertently contained the phone and the Web address for information on the H.A.L. program. The correct address is www.conehalearning.com, and the correct phone number is [illegible].

# ACHIEVING HIGH

## *A Virginia School Raises Expectations and Proves Every Child Can Succeed*

BY NICOLE ASHBY

Before summer recess begins, Tidewater Park Elementary School will be getting back test scores that chart how well its students are measuring up against state standards. Last year, 75 percent of students in the Norfolk, Virginia, school passed every subject area on the state exam—an impressive leap when just two years prior not a single fifth-grader passed the history or science portion of the test.

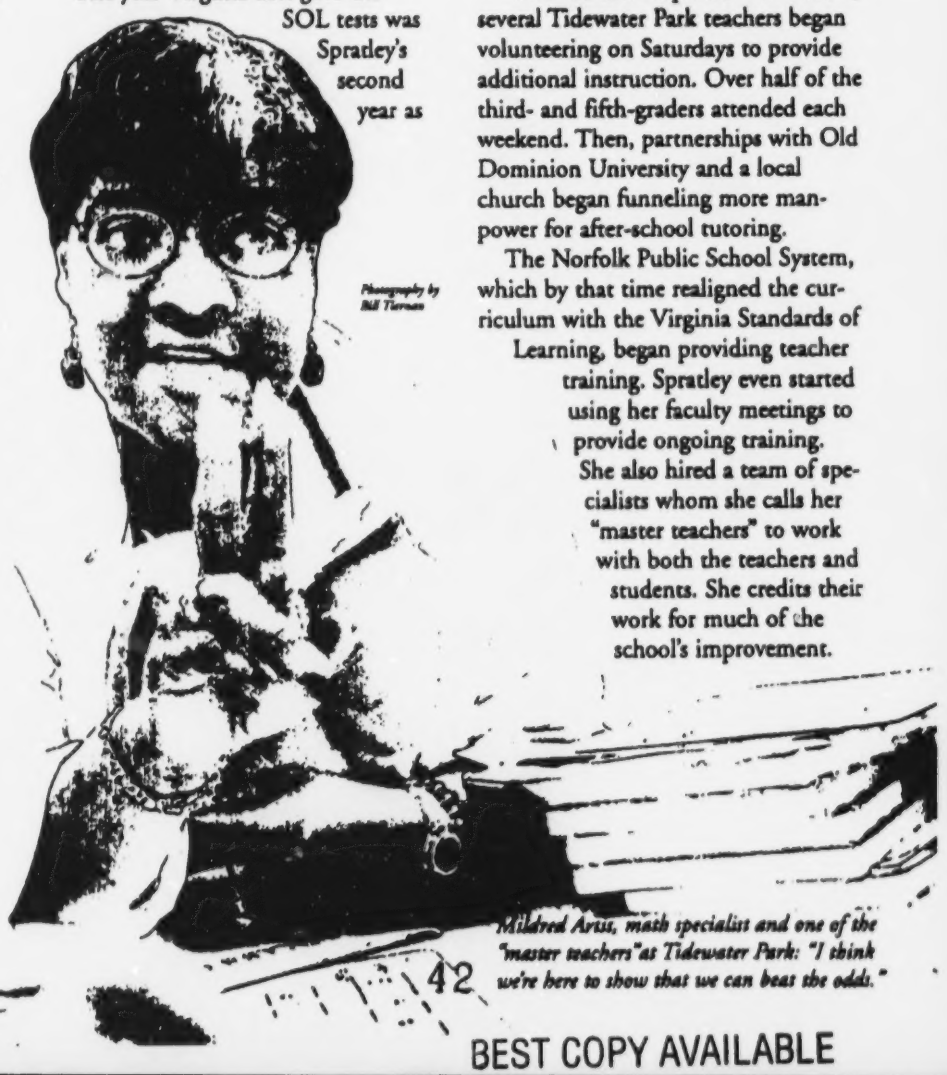
"The first year the test scores came out, they were supposed to be baseline data. But everywhere we went we were haunted by those scores," recalls Tidewater Park's principal Sylvia Spratley.

The 1998 report, which also showed that less than a quarter of third-graders at Tidewater Park met the basic math requirements, marked the first year Virginia students were taking the test. Many schools in the Commonwealth, however, did not fare well on the new exam, which was based on the newly adopted and rigorous Standards of Learning (SOL). As part of Virginia's education plan, the standards were put into place in 1995 as guides to districts and schools on what all students should know in four core subjects: English, mathematics, science, and history and social science. The assessments are administered in grades three, five and eight, as well as in selected high school courses.

The year Virginia first gave the SOL tests was Spratley's second year as principal at Tidewater Park. Although already challenged by the school's poor results on other standardized tests, Spratley said the state scores better focused her on the strategies needed for improving student achievement, prompting her and support staff to "work around the clock."

When school reopened in fall 1998, several Tidewater Park teachers began volunteering on Saturdays to provide additional instruction. Over half of the third- and fifth-graders attended each weekend. Then, partnerships with Old Dominion University and a local church began funneling more manpower for after-school tutoring.

The Norfolk Public School System, which by that time realigned the curriculum with the Virginia Standards of Learning, began providing teacher training. Spratley even started using her faculty meetings to provide ongoing training. She also hired a team of specialists whom she calls her "master teachers" to work with both the teachers and students. She credits their work for much of the school's improvement.



Photography by Bill Tiernan

*Mildred Artis, math specialist and one of the "master teachers" at Tidewater Park: "I think we're here to show that we can beat the odds."*





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*Principal Sylvia Spratley.*

Additionally, each class was either reduced to a maximum of 19 students or team-taught for larger numbers.

As a result, classes became more academically rigorous, lesson plans standards-driven, and every minute accounted for, which Spratley refers to as "time on task." Time was blocked in the morning to teach communications skills and in the afternoon for math, history and social science.

Spratley also began hosting monthly "SOL Training Dinners" for the parents, posting the test scores on the wall, explaining to them, "This is where we are," and then pointing to the standards saying, "This is where we have to go."

The fruit of Tidewater Park's labor was immediately evident: 1999 test scores for fifth-graders on the English exam rose to 43 percent, up from 18 percent in the previous year, and to 81 percent on the 2000 results.

## One Standard for All

Spratley says that the remedial efforts were easy compared to her greatest challenge. "One of my hardest tasks is to continue to foster the thought that we have to expect our children to learn," she says passionately. "It is not okay for our children to receive dumbed-down instruction…Challenge their minds."

She says because low income too often is tied to low expectations, the victory of Tidewater Park—where 88 percent of the students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch—was often met with disbelief.

Nonetheless, for the first time Spratley says she sees pride from the community, students and teachers. She considers having higher expectations, bolstered with state standards, to be a catalyst for that change. "Now everyone has something to work towards," she explains. "So there isn't a standard over here for Taylor Elementary—a wealthy school—and a standard over here for Tidewater Park. My students have to meet the same standard that children from other schools and other socio-economic backgrounds meet."

She says teaching content tied to standards beginning in kindergarten helps start children on an equal footing. Angela West, whose fifth-grade daughter and youngest son attend Tidewater Park, agrees. "It's a little harder for my daughter because she didn't start out doing the SOL, but my son has to know these 20 words to pass and he knows them. He already knows how to read in kindergarten," she muses.

## '69 1/2 Won't Do'

In the end, an accountability system, in which each stakeholder is held responsible for student achievement, must accompany the standards.

Spratley, who says she holds teachers accountable just as she is held accountable by the superintendent, expects every Tidewater Park student to master at least 70 percent of the SOL. "I say to my teachers, 'Now, 69 1/2 won't do,'" she says, but stresses, "The goal really is to get all of our students to meet the standards because even if we have 75 percent, we've left some children behind." Test data, which can be disaggregated by teacher to reveal whose students are not performing, is tied closely to end-of the-year evaluations.

Consequently, Lisa Ellick admits feeling pressure in teaching the third grade, the level when students are first tested on the SOLs. "We have to think of creative ways to get them to review those previous years along with focusing on the content that they need for the third grade," she says.

Although there are no measures for holding parents equally responsible, Spratley says the lack of parent involvement does not release educators from helping students progress. "If you get to the place where you don't think you're accountable 'because the mothers didn't do something,' then you're in the wrong field," she asserts.

Low-test results are also a determining factor for promotion to the next grade. Therefore, Tidewater Park employs innovative methods for teaching children that rewards and sanctions accompany their responsibility to learn.

For example, the "Conduct Chart," an idea from Old Dominion University, starts every child off each day with a green dot for superb behavior. Any infraction changes the dot through several coded colors that eventually end in a gold dot, the most serious offense: a conference with the parent. But the students are always given opportunities to redeem their "green" status.

By 2007, every school in Virginia will have to meet new criteria, which requires that 70 percent of students pass the tests in order for the school to receive accreditation.

Spratley, who says such requirements are at times needed to drive change, adds, "I think the accountability piece will be around for a long time, and not only for Virginia, because I've met principals from other states. The accountability idea is out there, so we either have to come aboard or get off."

For more information about Virginia's Standards of Learning, visit www.pen.k12.va.us. To learn more about the success of Tidewater Park, visit www.nps.k12.va.us/schools/tidewaterpark/index.htm, or call 757-628-2500.

PARTNERSHIP
*for Family Involvement in Education*

***A coalition of more than 7,200 education, community, religious and business organizations nationwide. To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.***

# Chicago Uses ACT Assessments to Urge Students to Achieve

Best known for the ACT Assessment®—a college admission and placement examination taken by more than one million high school students each year—ACT, Inc. is an independent, not-for-profit organization that offers more than a hundred assessment, research and program management services in education planning, career planning and workforce development. Though designed to meet a wide array of needs, all ACT programs and services have one guiding purpose: to help people achieve their education and career goals.

An astounding 85 percent of Chicago's 430,000 public school students are economically disadvantaged. To help them succeed, the Chicago Public School System has adopted EXPLORE® and PLAN®, programs offered by ACT, Inc., as assessments for all students.

"The sequence will allow the schools to monitor student growth over time," says Joseph Hahn, who directs research, analysis and assessment for the Chicago Public Schools. "Our major goal is to get more kids setting their sights on college. We want more students taking the rigorous curriculum our schools now offer, and we want them to think about getting into the most challenging college for which they are qualified."

To make a successful transition to college—even to graduate from high school—many young people in the Chicago school system face hurdles unimaginable in the nearby suburbs. But Hahn believes the assessments will generate discussion about career and educational planning at each stage of students' progress through high school.

"We expect educators to use information from the assessments to help students think about such questions as 'Where do you see yourself going? What do you want to do with your life?' We hope the testing will help bring about a new mindset, a new culture in our schools."

Despite their enormous problems, there are indications Chicago's schools are turning the corner. Recently, several poorly performing high schools were reassembled from the bottom up, with new curricula, principals, staff and teams of successful teachers helping the schools rebuild from ground zero.

Chicago's average ACT score, which seemed fixed at 17.2 in recent years, rose to 17.5 last year. "We expect another jump in 2000, when the students who participated in PLAN as tenth graders take the ACT Assessment," says Hahn. "We're not yet likely to reach the Illinois average of 21, but we hope to see more and more of our kids scoring 19 or 20. That will improve their chances for success in a two-year or four-year college."

For more information about ACT programs and services, visit www.act.org, or send an e-mail message to epas@act.org.

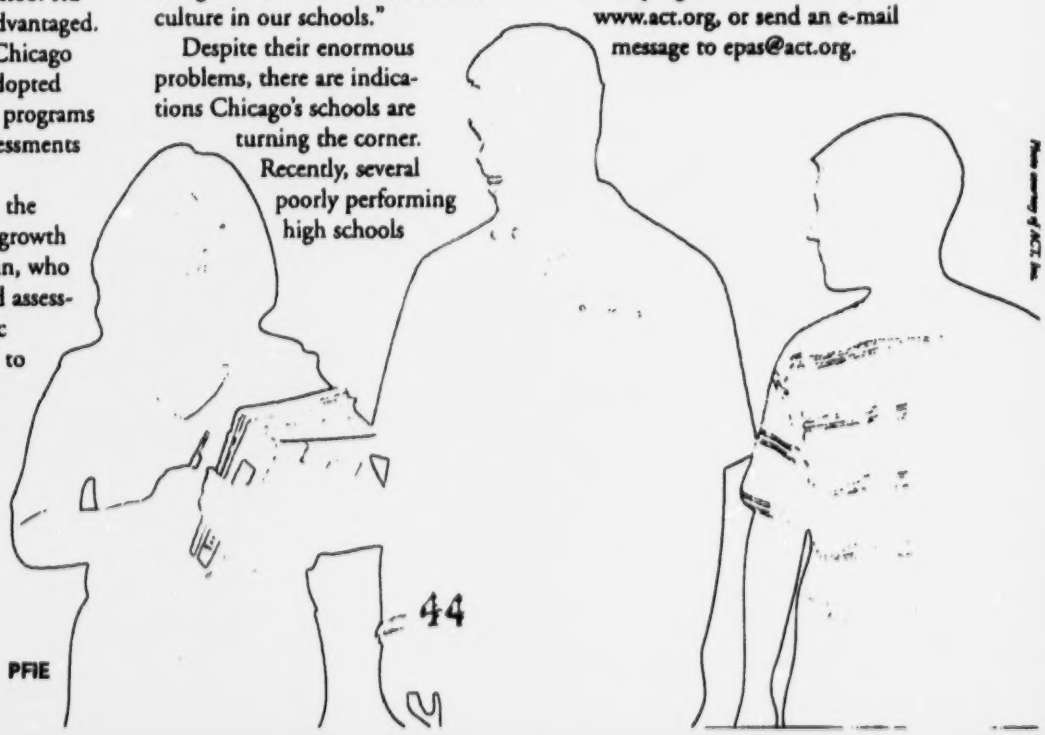

Photo courtesy of ACT, Inc.

*A Roundup of Recent Activities*

**Walton Farm Elementary School**
This school year, Walton Farm Elementary School in Landsdale, Pa., has been focusing on increasing student performance in mathematics, especially in the area of computation. Test scores are already revealing significant student progress. For instance, the number of fifth graders scoring 80–89 points on a curriculum-based assessment jumped to 23 percent in April, up from 5 percent in November. June results are expected to show a continual increase. "We are proud to have an excellent faculty, interested and supportive parents, and students who are willing to work hard," said Israela Franklin, principal of Walton Farm. For more information, visit www.northpennschools.k12.pa.us/walton.htm, or call 215-855-8800.

**Illinois State Board of Education**
In April, the Illinois State Board of Education administered its high-stakes test to about 120,000 high school juniors in the state for the first time. The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) measures student mastery of the "Illinois Learning Standards" in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social science. "First-year preparation for any test is difficult," admits Illinois State Superintendent of Education Glenn McGee, "but local districts admirably stepped up to the challenge and did a magnificent job of administering the test." PSAE is the first statewide test to incorporate a college entrance examination—the ACT assessment—and workplace-skills tests—also produced by ACT. For more information, visit www.isbe.net, or call 217-782-4823.

**Texas Education Agency**
The Texas Education Agency (TEA), which has jurisdiction over 1,040 school districts, including 142 charter schools, employs an accountability and assessment system that integrates the state curriculum. The Academic Excellence Indicator System serves as a basis for all ratings, rewards, and reports. Using the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), the agency also publishes school-, district-, and state-level reports. This spring, TAAS results revealed that 564 low-income Texas schools received high assessment ratings. Passing rates on the math section of the exit exam increased 3 percent from last year, with 89 percent of high school sophomores mastering the subject. For more information, visit www.tea.state.tx.us/tea/account.html, or call 512-463-9734.

## CALENDAR

**June 7–8**, Washington, D.C.
*National Fatherhood Initiative's Fourth Annual Summit on Fatherhood: "Broadening the Reach."* Call 301-948-0599, or visit www.fatherhood.org/summit.htm.

**June 15**, Chicago, Ill.
*Illinois Fatherhood Initiative's Father's Day Celebration.* Call 1-800-996-DADS (3237), or visit www.4fathers.org.

**June 20–23**, Washington, D.C.
*"Partners Make a Great IDEA": A National Summit on the Shared Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Call IDEA Partnership Projects at 1-877-433-2463, or visit www.ideainfo.org.

**June 28–July 1**, Minneapolis, Minn.
*Points of Light Foundation 2001 National Conference: "Community Volunteering and National Service."* Call TuNia Slade at 202-729-3220, or e-mail registration@pointsoflight.org.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The National Center for Education Statistics just released a report addressing the importance of parent involvement to students' academic success. For an online version of *Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools by Family Type and Resident Status*, visit http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch and key in number 2001032. For a paper copy, while supplies last, write the U.S. Department of Education, ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398, or call 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827), and specify the publication number above.

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*

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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 88 June/July 2001

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FIRST CLASS

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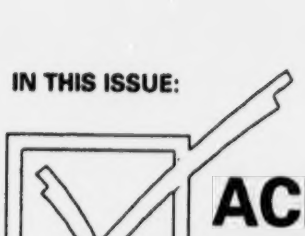

ACHIEVING HIGH
PAGE 4

# Measuring Student Performance

For the past 10 years, testing and accountability systems have become key elements of education reform, and it is becoming increasingly critical for states and districts to use tests responsibly to measure student achievement.

A report released this year, *Measuring What Matters*, calls tests that are valid, reliable and fair the best means of charting the country's progress toward the goal of improved academic achievement, but stresses that tests are a means, not an end, to school reform. The Committee for Economic Development (CED), a group of 220 business and education leaders who compiled the report, points out, "we cannot improve what we do not measure."

The 45-page report includes examples of states that are setting high academic standards and holding schools accountable for helping students reach these standards. It also suggests states consider the following as they craft testing and accountability provisions:

- Tests should be used now and improved upon—rather than waiting until they are "perfect."
- Holding students accountable requires providing them with adequate academic preparation for tests tied to promotion or graduation and with intensive instruction if they initially fail.
- A performance-based education system built on measuring student achievement costs money. Investments will be needed for improved tests, for information systems that make results available to educators and the public, for training in how to use performance data to improve instruction, and for assistance to schools and students whom tests show to be performing poorly.

*For a full copy of CED's report, visit www.ced.org.*

U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 89 | U P D A T E | August 2001

IR-FYI

*"We're going to show that there are good people in every community and that we can work together for the common good."*

*Roy Kaplan, executive director of the Tampa Bay region of the National Conference for Community and Justice*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

## Leveling the Playing Field

*An Interview with Christine Brooks, Director of Education's Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Center*

*On Jan. 29, President George W. Bush issued an executive order establishing Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in five federal agencies. Each center's first task is to conduct a survey of the agency's programs to determine how they may be made more accessible to faith-based and community groups. Christine Brooks, the new director of the U.S. Department of Education's center, recently shared some insights with* Community Update.

**What is the purpose of this new initiative?**

We feel that faith-based organizations have been involved in the provision of social services for a long time. We want to be sure that they have a level playing field and are allowed the opportunity to compete with other grant applicants. I truly think that this program initiative is going to be a win-win for everybody, especially for those underserved people who need additional social services to keep from falling through the cracks.

**Where have you seen already the success of faith-based and community partnerships?**

For instance, through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, we have examples of faith-based groups providing before- and after-school activities. And there are other places in the Department. Also, I feel fortunate to have worked in the District of Columbia where churches and other faith-based organizations have always been at the table for social service programs. The District has an excellent record of having the faith-based community involved. I think when all is said and done, we should certainly look at the District of Columbia for some of the models of how it works very well.

That's one of the things that we're trying to determine now with the survey

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY UPDATE
Issue No. 89 August 2001

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Community Update is published by the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

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# Satellite Broadcast Features Caring Partners

Earlier this year the Satellite Town Meeting—the Department of Education's monthly television program—assembled representatives of various faith-based and community organizations working to build stronger schools. The panel agreed that faith and community groups can be important allies for schools because they share the same values and commitment to children.

Rev. Johnnie Monroe of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, which runs an after-school tutorial program in Pittsburgh, Pa., defined the community-school nexus. "There are three basic institutions in the community....They are the home, the religious body, and the school....If we have those connected and we work with families, then we see a difference in the community," he said.

Other panelists included Rev. Gary Charles, president of the Alexandria Tutoring Consortium in Virginia; Rynn Mar Nichols, a school board member with the Alamosa Public Schools in Colorado; Jo McCord, a volunteer and partners-in-education coordinator for Broken Arrow Public Schools in Oklahoma; and Robert Gibbs, president of 100 Black Men of Jackson, a mentoring program in Mississippi.

All talked about the critical role of partnerships. "As an organization, we know we need the help of other [groups] and we want to give our help where it's needed," said Gibbs. "And the school system ought to reach out to [us] so we're there to help them."

To order a free copy of the April 2001 Satellite Town Meeting "Faith-Based and Community Organizations: Partners for Stronger Schools," call 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) with product number EK0365V, or order online at http://ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html, while supplies last.

The Satellite Town Meeting will resume its hour broadcast on Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. E.T. To join the meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit www.ed.gov/satelliteevent. Also, view live or archived Webcasts of the meeting by visiting Apple Computer's Apple Learning Interchange at http://ali.apple.com/events/aliqttv/.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

*Christine Brooks*

that we're doing. The survey, which will be available later this year, takes a look at what's happening in the Department of Education and at a number of participating groups. At this time we're collecting our data and will be working on the analysis of it.

**How can you encourage more community support for schools?**

I think everybody sees that there's a real need for all people of goodwill to step up to the plate. And we don't have to do a lot to encourage it. I think the initiative is a good start to find out what's happening now and then to see where the gaps are. And so I think what's happening and where we want to go to provide more services will be evident in the report.

*Before starting work at the Education Department, Brooks served as the state administrator for Community Services Block Grant Programs for the government of the District of Columbia. Previously a congressional fellow at the Brookings Institution, she has served in a number of positions with government agencies including the District of Columbia's Department of Human Services, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the state of Florida.*



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# Finding Common Ground

**By Sister Jennie Lechtenberg, *Los Angeles, Calif.***

It is increasingly commonplace to find foundations, corporations and government entities expecting—and at times requiring—organizations to work together to address community needs. The concept makes perfect sense: bring together organizations with unique skills and talents to collectively focus on broad-reaching issues and improve the human condition.

I believe that innovative partnerships can and should take on a variety of appearances. Certainly two or more organizations can work together to address specific client needs. But what other ways can organizations share resources, experience and knowledge to help one another and to improve the community at large?

At Puente Learning Center in Los Angeles, we have embraced the concept of collaboration. A wonderful example is our Neighborhood Partners in Education (NPE) Conference. Made possible by a generous grant from AT&T, the conference is a two-day program offered at no cost to nonprofits in the spirit of organizational growth and improved service. An engaging dialogue focuses on such key issues as developing effective fundraising strategies, building a strong board of directors, incorporating technology into educational programs, working strategically with elected officials and, of course, establishing effective partnerships.

In two years, more than 125 nonprofit organizations from across the country have participated in NPE. And in the true spirit of collaboration, Puente staff have not only shared knowledge and success with others, but have gleaned valuable information and insight from participants, making us stronger and more effective in our work.

Another successful collaboration involved working with more than 20 Eastside community organizations on a mayoral debate hosted at Puente. Collectively we ensured that the voices and concerns of the residents of our community were heard and their concerns addressed by the leading candidates.

It is essential that organizations recognize that working with others can require a significant investment of time, energy, human resources and dollars. An organization considering partnerships must honestly and critically evaluate the partnership's effect on the organization, on the fulfillment of the organization's mission, and on the needs of the community at large.

It is tempting to pursue partnerships to obtain badly needed funds for program operation. I would suggest avoiding the temptation. Choose partners or collaborators carefully, based on potential outcomes that are mutually beneficial and that align with your organization's purpose. Be sure that all partners agree, in advance, to their expected contribution to the project. Establish a formal written agreement at the onset to help avoid misunderstanding.

Partnerships alone are not a panacea for the challenges that nonprofits must address. If implemented thoughtfully, they can offer creative solutions to community needs. If launched haphazardly, they can fail to help your clients and negatively affect your organization's reputation, which you've worked so hard to establish.

Embrace the concept, but move forward with cautious optimism.

*Sister Jennie Lechtenberg is the founder and executive director of Puente Learning Center, a nonprofit, nonsectarian education organization in east and south Los Angeles. She serves on a number of local and national committees focused on education and literacy.*

# New Report Outlines State of Education

Enrollments are continuing to grow at all levels of education, and coursetaking in advanced science and mathematics is increasing, yet gaps persist in education performance and participation, according to *The Condition of Education 2001*, a recent report by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

While U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige noted some positive trends documented in the report, he cautioned, "The *Condition of Education* tells us concretely that we are far from where we need to be in terms of student performance. We are failing to close the persistent achievement and attainment gaps—and we lag behind other developed nations in mathematics and science achievement."

Produced annually, *The Condition of Education 2001* presents the latest figures on the health of American education around 59 indicators that survey enrollment, outcomes, factors affecting the quality of education, and parental and financial support.

A special feature in this edition is a message for students, parents and schools that rigorous academic course work in high school makes it much more likely that students whose parents never attended college will attend postsecondary institutions.

For the full NCES study, visit http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch and key in publication number 2001072. A hard copy may be ordered at no charge by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) with the identification number ERN3244P, while supplies last.

# ANYTOWN

## Community Program Changes Tampa Youth from the Inside Out

BY NICOLE ASHBY

Vicki and Louie Cazares immediately recognized the difference in their teenage daughter after she returned from "Anytown," a leadership retreat near their Tampa, Fla., home. "When your child comes home and tells you she had a 'life-changing experience,' you can't help but take notice," says her mother. Once shy, Renae had risen in confidence, joining a local youth committee, embracing persons whom before she had not. The change was so striking that next summer the Cazareses sent their son for the experience.

Like Renae, many youths, along with their families and schools, testify to the transforming power of Anytown. A week-long program, Anytown brings together a mix of high school students to help them identify who they are, what they believe, and how to act on those beliefs.

In approximately 45 cities across the nation, Anytown is developing thousands of young people into promising leaders capable of creating change in their communities. It is one of a variety of youth initiatives by the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), a nonprofit human relations organization. NCCJ, founded in 1927 as the National Conference for Christians and Jews, has its roots in interfaith activities to bridge divisions between the two religious groups. The name change reflects the organization's continuing mission to create a society more tolerant and respectful of all religions, races and cultures.

"If we just let people live in their own little isolated hamlets, they're never going to break down these stereotypes," explains Roy Kaplan, executive director of NCCJ's Tampa Bay region.

This summer, Anytown in Tampa Bay wraps up its tenth season, having reached more than 3,000 teens since 1991. According to Kaplan, this site has one of the busiest schedules, with two weekly sessions during spring break and eight during summer recess.

Tampa Bay also sponsors the only Anytown for which students do not have to pay. Three area counties—Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco—underwrite the cost of sending their students by raising additional funds to match school dollars. Pinellas, for instance, gets support from the Juvenile Welfare Board.

Witnessing a difference among Anytown graduates, school systems want to send more students to the program, causing the number of sessions to increase from three to ten in the last five years. "We've all become much more aware of the need to give our students some tools that go beyond reading and math," says Candy Olson, a member of the Hillsborough County School Board—whose daughter also went through Anytown last summer.

She recalls, among many examples of the program's influence, a local Anytown alum who started a student-teacher support group to help her peers overcome the issues they face, such as gangs and youth violence. Olson says tolerance is very important in a school district as large as Hillsborough where diversity exists along socio-economic and racial lines—half of its 180,000 students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and two in four overall are ethnic minorities.

"'Understanding,'" explains Olson, "sounds sort of fuzzy and fluffy. And although it's hard to define, it's the kind of thing that is missing when we see school violence: an understanding of how you relate to others."

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In a week packed with exercises and discussion groups that take up issues from racism to ageism, Anytowners come to understand their own biases as they learn to break down the stereotypes that cause discord.

For instance, during a workshop examining the differences between genders, the girls and boys were asked to portray how they see each other and then how they would like to be seen. Many questions ensued. Startling to some was the revelation that in response to the boys' question "Have you ever felt you weren't pretty enough?" none of the girls felt they measured up to what they saw as a beauty standard. The girls learned that the boys felt equally troubled by their own set of standards, as each male participant stood in embarrassment when asked if he had ever been disciplined harshly for crying.

Evoking sympathy for others sometimes requires "a little bit of humiliation," believes 16-year-old Anthony Galvan. He said he was taken aback at what disabled persons endure after a day-long simulation, in which participants pulled a paper from a hat to discover who had one hand or no hands or was wheelchair-bound or blind.

The students' values are constantly tested in activities and dialogues, including talks about the Middle Passage, Holocaust and Japanese internment, which provide a larger lens of prejudices that exist outside their own.

"Anytown isn't about telling kids what to think," says Margarita Sarmiento, associate director of NCCJ Tampa Bay. "It encourages kids to determine what they believe. And once they determine what they believe, to determine how they're going to stand up for what they believe in." She says the goal is to mold leaders, instead of crowd pleasers, who will care about social justice.

Anytown targets ninth- through twelfth-graders at a time when they begin to carve out their own identities or accept roles they feel society prescribes them. "These kids are fortunate. Compared to most adults who are still trying to find out who they are, these kids are fast-forwarding through their identity formation," says Hillsborough County school psychologist Eileen Lyons, who volunteered this summer as an adviser for the first time.

The students are recruited through nominations by their schools or community groups. A number of them are already involved in organizations such as the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club.

At Anytown, students—called "delegates" because they are considered representatives of the schools and communities they will help change—are expected to continue a volunteer spirit beyond the program. Among the opportunities is joining NCCJ's "Youth Congress," an advocacy committee in each county, or returning to Anytown as a counselor in their junior year.

"The change is not going to last if they don't continue to stay involved with the kind of things that NCCJ is doing," says Sherita Anderson, a recent Vanderbilt graduate who has been coming back to Anytown as a counselor every year since 1993.

Anytown Tampa Bay maintains a roster of 200 volunteers who serve one or two weeks a year as a counselor or adviser. Devoted to the mission of changing young people's lives, many staff volunteers give up their vacations to support the program. They also commit more of their time taking training throughout the year.

"It's like a vacation in itself," admits Anytown adviser and former delegate Martin Nossett, who just completed the Coast Guard Academy. "It's so enjoyable to come back to see the growth from when we first get a group of kids to when they leave—to see 50 individuals leave as a family."

Sarmiento says everything is built around creating a sense of community where students can let down their guard and share thoughts openly. After a week of pouring out emotions they can't help but make a connection.

"These kids are gonna change the world," Kaplan says, though he admits the change is not always immediately received in their hometowns. "Are we going to completely reverse racism? No, but we're going to show that there are good people in every community and that we can work together for the common good."

For more information about the Anytown program in Tampa Bay, visit www.nccjtampabay.org, or call 727-568-9333.

"Most people come here skeptical, but they always end up coming together. And you completely see a change in them—a big change."

—Renee Cazares, 2000 Anytown delegate

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# Illinois Partnership Connects Fathers and Children

Fatherlessness in America is at historically high levels. Four out of 10 children—an estimated 24 million—do not have their fathers present in their homes. Research shows that children from father-absent homes are more likely to do poorly in school or drop out; suffer from lower levels of self-esteem; get involved with drugs, alcohol and gangs; become teen parents; get into trouble with the law; or become incarcerated.

Four years ago, a group of volunteers in Illinois decided to do something to help prevent these situations from happening. They created the country's first statewide public benefit corporation, Illinois Fatherhood Initiative (IFI), whose mission is to connect children and fathers by promoting responsible fathering and helping equip men to become better fathers and father figures.

"As the father of five young children, ages 4 to 11, I was interested in becoming a more involved dad but didn't know exactly where to begin," says David Hirsch, president and founder of the volunteer initiative.

IFI operates in schools, hospitals and the workplace. From the beginning, IFI has developed partnerships and strategic alliances with other organizations whose mission is consistent with improving outcomes for children. "When we started out, we had some good ideas, yet didn't have any resources. We partnered out of necessity to see our efforts grow," says Hirsch.

One of IFI's oldest and largest programs is the annual fatherhood essay contest in which children write about their dads. There are four primary strategic partners including the Archdiocese of Chicago's Office of Catholic Education, Chicago Public Schools, Illinois State Board of Education, and the National Center for Fathering in Kansas City, Kan.

The school systems play an integral role in distributing the contest materials. More than 250,000 essays have been collected during the past five years. Annually, between 500 and 1,000 volunteer readers help select the 144 essay finalists based on predetermined standards. Twelve fathers—a set of three dads, stepdads, granddads, and father figures each—are also recognized at an annual Father's Day dinner celebration.

"We're very fortunate to have the support of our partners. The Office of Catholic Education, for example, not only distributes materials to the schools but does a wonderful job of collecting and sorting all the essays for the volunteers to evaluate. I don't know what we would do without them," says Hirsch.

For additional information, call 1-800-996-DADS (1-800-996-3237), or visit www.4fathers.org.

*Paul Siegel poses with his daughter Kaity, whose essay led to his election as IFI's 2000 Illinois Father of the Year.*

*A Round up of Recent Activities*

**Boys and Girls Clubs of America**, as part of a partnership with the J.C.Penney after-school program, is implementing its national education program, "Project Learn," during the next three years in clubs across the country. Designed to enable youths to become high-achieving students through their involvement in club activities and programs, Project Learn features: homework help and tutoring; high-yield learning activities intended to be fun and engaging; parent and community involvement; collaboration with schools; and incentives and academic goal setting. Established in 1860, Boys and Girls Clubs of America inspire and enable young people to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. Boys and Girls Clubs serve more than 3.5 million youths annually in 2,850 clubs nationwide. For more information, visit www.bgca.org, or call 1-800-854-CLUB (1-800-854-2582).

**Committee on Public Education and Literacy of the National Council of Churches** works to educate its member denominations on issues in education and ways they can effectively collaborate with public schools. Recently, the committee sponsored a meeting for Washington-based organizations interested in education policy and funding issues. "The discussion reflected a renewed interest in how faith-based agencies can encourage support for our schools," observed committee member Rev. Dave Brown. The committee also just released its latest publication, *It's About Children!* as a resource for congregations to use in encouraging their members' support for public schools. For more information, contact Rev. Dave Brown at 35006 Thirteenth Place, S.W., Federal Way, WA 90823 or dbrown7086@aol.com.

**Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.** (PNBC) will host its summer "Youth Rally," which will include professional athletes, scholars and community leaders motivating children to achieve their dreams. The rally, scheduled for Aug. 7 at the Tampa Convention Center in Florida, will feature workshops on career and educational development, including a session on scholarship sources. In addition, parents will be invited for discussions of ways they can become more involved in their children's education. Formed in 1961, PNBC comprises more than 1,800 churches in 34 states nationwide and partners with other faith-based and community organizations to help improve educational opportunities for children. For more information, visit www.pnbc.org, or call 202-396-0558.

**Public Private Ventures** (P/PV), based in Philadelphia, has been working since 1978 conducting research and demonstrations in search of useful solutions to the common problems of urban America. Through faith-based and community partnerships, P/PV established literacy centers called "Youth Education for Tomorrow" (YET) centers for children and young adults at least two years behind their grade level. By November 2000, 21 centers were in operation, each primarily serving 15 to 50 elementary school children. Joseph Tierney, who is responsible for the project at P/PV, said, "The YET centers are not only helping their children learn to read, but are helping this diverse set of faith-based institutions synthesize their practical and spiritual missions." Currently, P/PV is working on opening 10 additional centers. For more information, visit www.ppv.org, or call 215-557-4400.

**September 19–21**, New York, N.Y. *Fifth Annual Work-Life Congress.* Call *Working Mother* magazine at 1-888-735-6192, or fax 212-445-6238.

**September 29**, Washington, D.C. *Greater Washington Urban League's Sixth Annual Parent Expo.* Call 202-265-8200.

**October 31–November 2**, Anchorage, Alaska *Eighteenth Annual Symposium on Partnerships in Education: "Exploring New Frontiers for Student Success."* Call the National Association of Partners in Education at 703-836-4880, or visit www.partnersineducation.org.

**November 30–December 2**, San Diego, Calif. *Zero to Three 16th National Training Institute.* Call Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families at 202-624-1760, or visit www.zerotothree.org.

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources, and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*

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COMMUNITY UPDATE
Issue No. 89 August 2001

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FIRST CLASS

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ANYTOWN

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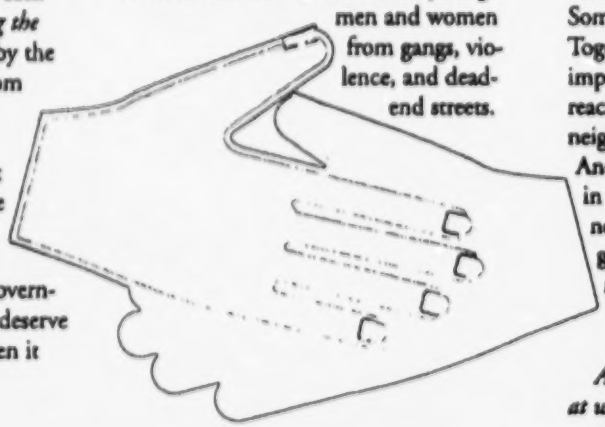
# Rallying the Armies of Compassion

Throughout the nation, educational programs offered by churches, synagogues and mosques, as well as grassroots organizations, are making significant contributions to children's learning. Federal and state agencies can do more to support and partner with faith-based and community initiatives, argues *Rallying the Armies of Compassion*, published by the White House with a foreword from President Bush. Below is a brief excerpt:

"The federal government must continue to play a prominent role in addressing poverty and social distress. But that role must move beyond funding traditional nongovernmental organizations. Americans deserve a rich mix of options because when it comes to conquering addiction, poverty, recidivism, and other social ills, one size does not fit all....

"In Boston, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Indianapolis and many other places, people of faith and other unsung local heroes have started innovative partnerships with the police and juvenile authorities to divert and rescue young men and women from gangs, violence, and dead-end streets.



Hundreds of community development corporations, often connected with one or more houses of worship, work to stimulate economic activity, rebuild rundown housing, renew neighborhood pride, and revive municipal services....

"Faith-based and grassroots organizations do not always perform miracles. Some do well and others are less effective. Together, however, they are vitally important resources in our communities, reaching out to needy neighbors and neighborhoods in thousands of ways. And when they do so, they often help in ways that government programs cannot, providing love as well as services, guidance and friendship as well as a meal or training. These are precious resources, great gifts of American society."

*A complete copy of the text is available at www.whitehouse.gov/news/reports/faithbased.html.*



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U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue No. 91 | U P D A T E | September 2001

*"The more we share with parents about this type of research...the more they will start to ask themselves 'What am I teaching my baby?'"*

*Lisa Kaufman, coordinator of the Early Advantage program for the Los Angeles County Office of Education*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

## "Ready to Read, Ready to Learn"

*White House Summit Highlights New Research on Early Childhood Learning*

First Lady Laura Bush joined U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson to co-host this summer's White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development, "Ready to Read, Ready to Learn." The summit unveiled a new federal effort to develop and promote research-based cognitive development activities for preschool-age children.

The summit was created by Mrs. Bush to highlight the early learning activities that parents and educators can use to prepare young children for school. More than 400 government, education, community and philanthropic leaders from across the country attended the meeting at Georgetown University on July 26–27.

Secretary Paige called the summit the first step in a long-range and widespread effort to raise public awareness of the science of and need for early childhood cognitive development. He described the new task force of senior education and health and human services department officials announced at the meeting as a way to put the research and recommendations presented during the course of the summit to work in government programs for young children.

"Together, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services will ensure that the Head Start and preschool programs we support are doing the right things and getting results," Paige said. "We will also work to make sure every adult who cares for a child understands the methods we have learned at this summit and will use them at home. In other words, we will get the government's house in order and spread the word to all the other houses, too."

The summit participants also heard from the newly appointed assistant secretary of education for elementary and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
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COMMENTS
ADDRESS CHANGES
CREDITS
Rod Paige
Laura M. Rich
John McGrath
Sarah Ashley
Julie Black
Elliott Smalley
Derrick Smith
Sharon Stevens
Jason Salvo Design

# Pediatric Program Reaches Out to Families

During a regular checkup, pediatricians in the "Reach Out and Read" program give parents a prescription for their children's total well-being: "Read with your children."

Serving more than 1.4 million children and their families each year, Reach Out and Read is a national program that seeks to make early literacy an integral part of pediatric primary care. At every well-child examination for children from six months to five years of age, pediatricians encourage parents to read aloud to their young children and give books to their patients to take home.

*Zuckerman with patient.*

The program started at Boston City Hospital (now Boston Medical Center) with educators, doctors and nurses bringing books from home to the waiting room so that children could read while they were waiting for their appointments. When it was discovered how quickly the books disappeared, founders Robert Needlman, M.D., Kathleen Fitzgerald Rice, M.S.Ed., and Barry Zuckerman, M.D. developed the Reach Out and Read concept.

"Pediatrics has always gone beyond treating illness to trying to prevent problems," explains Zuckerman. "Promoting literacy is an important and natural step in the evolution of preventative pediatrics."

Over the past 12 years, the Reach Out and Read program has spread across the country with more than 1,100 sites located at hospitals, health centers and private pediatric offices. Thousands of pediatricians and nurse practitioners have received training in how to demonstrate to parents and children the importance and techniques of reading together.

Among supporters are the U.S. Department of Education, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and Scholastic, Inc.

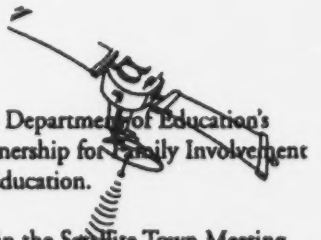
For information about starting a Reach Out and Read site, visit www.reachoutandread.org or call 617-629-8042.

# Satellite Town Meeting

**Tuesday, September 18**
**8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.**

The September Satellite Town Meeting, the first of the 2001–2002 season, will focus on the most productive ways that parents can contribute to their children's academic success, as well as the best ways for schools to reach out to parents and families. Secretary Paige and his guest panelists will explore various topics in the broadcast entitled "Families Involved in Learning: The Key to Student Success," including:

- The latest research on family involvement,
- Empowering parents to be better advocates for their children in dealing with schools and school districts,
- Ways that schools and teachers can be more welcoming to parents,
- Things parents can do in the home to encourage student achievement, and
- The Department of Education's Partnership for Family Involvement in Education.



To join the Satellite Town Meeting, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit www.ed.gov/satelliteevent. The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund, Target Stores, and Riverdeep Interactive Learning.



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# Staying Involved During the High School Years

**An Interview with Derrick Smith, a Parent at James Madison Memorial High School, *Madison, Wis.***

*Derrick Smith is one of the founders of "AHANA" (Asian, Hispanic, African American, and Native American), a parent group at James Madison Memorial High School in Madison, Wis. The group promotes family involvement as well as smaller learning environments in school, which have been shown to be effective in closing the achievement gap between ethnic minority students and their peers.*

### What led to the start of AHANA?

We felt that it was important that all parents get involved with their children in the high school. When kids get to that age, they tend to feel isolated. Because there are two wage earners for some families and a single parent in others, there's not a lot of time for parents to really sit down and talk with their kids about high school and the problems and pressures they encounter—especially for kids of color. Here in Madison, where there's a 4-percent black population in some high schools, there is a problem with kids of color getting acclimated. I think sometimes when school administrators and teachers see parents of color they think their ideas—and ideals—are different from those who are not of color. But most people want their kids to have the best education, and parents have to be at the forefront of that.

### How can high school parents become more active?

One thing is to visit the campus, because then you really see what your child is going through. Also, by stepping onto the campus you make teachers and administrators aware that you are holding them accountable for the things that you feel are important.

### How do your sons deal with having their father on campus?

Some parents want their kids to feel independent and they want to be a "friend" to their kids—and I don't think there's anything wrong with that—but teenagers need to have their parents involved in their day-to-day lives. We can't just send them off to school and expect four years later that they're going to be these great young adults....

I don't worry about being "uncool," because there are too many kids falling through the cracks. I don't want to embarrass my sons; I understand peer pressure. But if I don't take the time to go to the school and find out what's going on, I can't expect somebody else to do that. So I get them involved and say, "I'm going to call your counselor next week to sit down with her for a few minutes to see how you're doing and look at some of the college issues that you have and I'd like you to be there with me. What's your schedule?"

### How can the school involve more parents?

Sometimes you have to put the onus on the teachers and the administrators to meet you when you can: after hours, early in the morning or at your home. I think that's where some of the issues in education have changed from when I was a child. Before, if you had an issue, your teacher could come to your house or meet you somewhere convenient. Nowadays, we don't see a lot of that.

We now are talking with the administrators at Memorial to see if we can make it more convenient for parents who can't get there easily. We need to send buses to their community centers, or give them a taxi voucher, or get them to school some other way. Another way we try to welcome parents to our meetings is to have interpreters—both Spanish and Hmong.

A

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

secondary education, Susan Neuman, who told of the findings in her own research about the effect of children's surroundings on how and when they learn to read. "There is no way that we can be successful without parental involvement and parental choice," Neuman told the audience.

Closing the summit, Secretary Paige challenged the participants to spread the word about what adults can do to help children learn. "We will encourage adults to read with children and encourage teachers to stress cognitive development with their young charges," Paige said. "We need to build a bridge between powerful scientific research, homes and preschools, and make sure that adults know how vital it is that children have strong cognitive development, even before they enter school. I look forward to working with you and with teachers and parents around the country to ensure that no child is left behind."

More information on the White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development is available at www.ed.gov.



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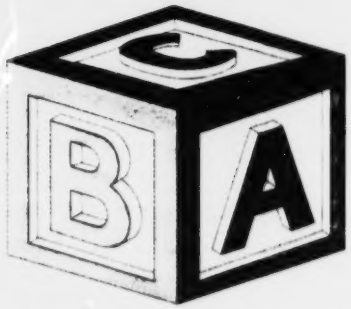


# Priming the Primary Educator

BY NICOLE ASHBY

*A Look at L.A. County's Parent Involvement Programs*

This fall, visitors to the Del Amo Fashion Center in Southern California will find a new and unique mall attraction next to the food court and department store. Colorful floor stencils of numbers and letters will direct them to the "Early Advantage Center," a project by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the Los Angeles County Education Foundation.

The center, which opens in November at the largest shopping mall on the West Coast, will serve as a one-stop shop for parents who want to learn what they can do to ensure their children's success in the primary school years. According to LACOE, the Early Advantage Center will be the first of its kind in the nation.

"What this office—its board and its superintendent—realized," says LACOE's acting superintendent Marilyn Gogolin, "is that if we really want to change student achievement, if we really want to stop playing catch-up or stop trying to change the life of a child after the child's already in school, we have to do something different."

The Early Advantage Center is the latest effort in a chain of initiatives by LACOE to prepare the parent as the child's first teacher and part of the county's strategic plan to improve school readiness for all children, particularly for those in the most need. The concept was born three years ago at local hospitals as an outreach program for expecting mothers and parents of newborns. But LACOE recognized that, in order to make significant change in a county of 1.7 million children, it had to go where the masses are.

"So we realized that the mall is a place of entertainment. It's a place to just go and look around when you can't afford to go to a skating rink or a $40 rock concert," adds Gogolin. Services through Early Advantage will be free to the public.

With negotiations under way for a second center, the Del Amo site will be a prototype for major malls throughout Los Angeles County, leading to greater community support for education, LACOE hopes. The Del Amo Fashion Center, a privately owned corporation, jumpstarted the project by donating 5,500 square feet of prime retail space.

"For the longest time, businesses that wanted to support education were left to maybe adopt a school or write a check," says Sophia Waugh, president of the Los Angeles County Board of Education. "But now we're talking about something much more sophisticated: businesses having real impact on a child's life at the very earliest stage."

Decorated with Sesame Street-like props and other visuals, the center will be organized into learning stations that will focus on activities for building children's skills, from cognitive abilities to physical development. For example, one section devoted to infants and toddlers will include a play area. There also will be two literacy rooms—one for pre-kindergartners, the other for children of all ages—which will contain books, audiotapes and an area for storytelling.

However, the Early Advantage Center will not be a drop-off facility. A sign reading "Every child must be accompanied by an adult" will be posted to remind visitors of the importance of parent involvement.

A second component of the center focuses on training caregivers and parents, including grandparents who account for a large percentage of the child-rearing adults in L.A. County. There will be workshops and classes led by early childhood experts explaining, among other topics, the most recent findings on how a baby's brain is stimulated to learn.

"The more we share with parents about this type of research, the next time they do anything, let's say, go and grab themselves a bowl of cereal, the more they will start to ask themselves 'What am I teaching my baby?' just by pouring cereal in a bowl," says Early Advantage's coordinator Lisa Kaufman, whose research contributed to the development of the program.

In addition, through the project's Child Care Training Institute, child-care providers can take workshops on activities to help children learn, on health and safety issues, and on caring for

*A sketch of the new center.*

special needs children.

Another feature of the center, which will operate on mall hours, organizes resources such as publications or contacts for families to learn about additional services, whether economic, social or health-related.

### Trainer of Trainers

With the Early Advantage initiative, LACOE plans to bring under one roof several of its parent programs being offered at various sites throughout its 81 school districts. As the largest regional education agency in the country, LACOE is trying to build capacity at the local level by providing training to schools, which in turn train the parents, who then mobilize themselves to train more parents.

"To empower parents to be able to share key information with their own parent community is what this is all about," says Nancy Jenkins, a former school board member who translated her experiences as a mother of three into coordinating LACOE's Parent University. The program, which covers math and reading coaching, standards and assessments, and educational technology, has a Web site with more than 250 pages of instructional materials for parents and caregivers to use with children at home.

Another county effort for building home-school connections, the Parent Education Center, offers training to parents on topics ranging from college preparation to school safety. The center also trains school staff on how to communicate effectively with parents from diverse cultures.

Daniel Gil's extensive involvement in the education of his six children led to a position as coordinator of the Parent Education Center at Abraham Lincoln High School. As a Mexican immigrant who took adult classes at night while working full time, Gil can relate to the parents in his largely Hispanic neighborhood who work two or three jobs. He encourages them to stay involved both at home and at school in their children's education in spite of the workload. "I'm talking parent to parent, so they believe me," he says.

*Ma with daughters Judy (left) and Kathy.*

Los Angeles County serves one of the country's most diverse school systems, with some ethnic populations larger than those at the state level. Much of the parent training provided is translated into several languages, including Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Armenian.

Because the goal for each program is to develop the parent as a partner in their children's education, there is some overlap in topics covered, but each effort has a slightly different focus.

Five years ago LACOE adopted the initiative "Parent Expectations Support Achievement (PESA)," a parent version of the national long-running program for teachers. Instead of concentrating on student behavior to improve student achievement, the Teacher Expectations Support Achievement program looks at changing educators' attitudes towards children's academic potential to ensure all students are held to the same high standards. With a similar mission, PESA examines the interaction between parent and child to foster high expectations in the home.

Before her first PESA workshop, Daisy Ma says she thought she was doing a good job in spending time with her two daughters. Through the training she later learned that watching television is a passive activity that does not provide the same quality of interaction as, for instance, reading a book together or teaming up to do household chores.

"Being a parent is kind of a new job in our lives," says Ma, now a PESA parent facilitator and mentor for Chinese families. "Every year it's changing and we need to learn something new to be good parents."

The Los Angeles County Office of Education is a member of the U.S. Department of Education's Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. For more information about LACOE's parent programs, visit www.lacoe.edu, or call Dee Nishimoto, director of the Division of Parent and Community Services, at 562-922-6381.

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***A coalition of more than 7,200 education, community, religious and business organizations nationwide. To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.***

# Camp Fire's Family Club Builds Partnerships

For over 90 years, Camp Fire USA has helped build caring and confident youths and future leaders through its K–12 programs, its partnership with schools, and its deliberate and effective involvement of parents and families in programming for youth.

The newest addition to Camp Fire's collection of family-oriented programming is the Community Family Club, which creates collaborations with communities and schools and facilitates family togetherness.

Designed by Camp Fire after two years of research about consumers, including parents, teachers and community members, the program draws upon the support of all involved to provide developmental programming for all family members during non-school hours.

"Community Family Club involves the entire family—regardless of the form the family takes in today's society," says Stewart Smith, national chief executive officer for Camp Fire USA. "It offers a unique opportunity for parents to find a community support group for raising their children. Most important, it is outcome-based and tracks the progressive learning experiences and developmental assets acquired by both youths and adults."

Camp Fire USA℠

Today's kids. Tomorrow's leaders.

This innovative program is designed to be delivered in four primary venues: schools, churches, corporations and childcare settings. Families in the club meet at least once a month to participate in developmentally appropriate activities with their children. Older youths have an opportunity to take on leadership roles as well.

At a school-based site, families partner with classroom teachers and counselors to provide fun club activities that enhance the skills being taught in the school curriculum. This allows parents and community mentors to become involved as partners with the school in children's learning.

"Once you experience the family club, you're hooked," says Irma Flores-Brothers, principal of Richard J. Wilson Elementary School in Fort Worth, Texas. Flores-Brothers found the Community Family Club to be a great way to increase family involvement in school activity.

"Partnership is essential....We all have to care, to be involved, and to show children that there are people to help them achieve," she adds. Community Family Club is an example of what can happen when schools, families and community-based organizations work together for the benefit of children and youths.

Community Family Clubs are currently being piloted in seven states. Systemwide testing of the program is scheduled for late fall, with full implementation of the program in 41 states and the District of Columbia by summer of 2002.

For more information, call 1-800-669-6884 or visit www.campfireusa.org.

# ABOUT our PARTNERS

## *A Roundup of Recent Activities*

*Harvard graduate Heather Weiss (left) speaks with a mother and her children at a Boston elementary school.*

**Harvard Family Research Project** (HFRP), at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, provides strategies for family involvement and community collaboration to support student achievement through ongoing research. Among its projects, the Family Involvement Network of Educators connects over 300 teacher-trainers committed to preparing educators for greater family involvement in education. Resources include research, publications and training tools on various topics related to increasing family involvement. In addition, HFRP offers two online services free of charge: a new database of after-school program evaluations, now available in a pilot version, and a monthly newsletter, *The Evaluation Exchange*, a compilation of articles from evaluators and practitioners worldwide. For more information, visit http://gseweb.harvard.edu/hfrp.

**IBM** will contribute an additional $25 million to expand its Reinventing Education grant program, bringing the total value of this technology and school reform initiative to $70 million. Since 1994, IBM has provided Reinventing Education grants to 21 school districts and states in the United States, as well as to eight countries, to develop technology solutions that support school reform efforts and raise student achievement. Grants in Charlotte and Durham, N.C., and Detroit, Mich., are implementing the IBM Learning Village, an Internet-based tool that connects schools with homes, community centers and housing developments to allow parents to conference with teachers, learn about their children's homework, and see how their children are performing against standards. Parents in Durham have additional access to computers through a partnership with Duke University. For more information, visit www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives or call 914-499-6692.

**National Center for Family Literacy** (NCFL), a nonprofit organization based in Louisville, Ky., is dedicated to improving literacy services for families to gain the resources they need to support their children's education. NCFL developed a literacy model that integrates adult education instruction, children's education, Parent and Child Together Time, and Parent Time into a comprehensive program for families with preschoolers. While their children learn in nearby classrooms, parents pursue their own educational goals. During the day, parents and children work and play together, giving parents the chance to increase their skills as their children's first teachers. Because of the model's success, NCFL began development of a school-age model, which is being implemented in 45 Title I elementary schools nationwide. For more information, visit www.famlit.org or call 1-877-FAM-LIT-1 (1-877-326-5481).

*Learning together is at the heart of a family literacy project in Louisville, Ky.*

## CALENDAR

**October 17–19**, Mobile, Ala.
The first in a series of fall conferences on *Improving America's Schools*, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education will hold a Families Engaged in Student Learning Institute on day two of each conference. The remaining dates are Nov. 13–15 in Reno, Nev., and Dec. 17–19 in San Antonio, Texas. Call 1-800-203-5494. Also, visit www.ncbe.gwu.edu/iasconferences or e-mail ias_conferences@ed.gov.

**October 31–November 2**, Anchorage, Alaska.
*Eighteenth Annual Symposium on Partnerships in Education: "Exploring New Frontiers for Student Success."* Call the National Association of Partners in Education at 703-836-4880 or visit www.partnersineducation.org.

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources, and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*

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U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
Issue No. 91 UPDATE September 2001

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FIRST CLASS

IN THIS ISSUE:

Priming the Primary Educator
PAGE 4

# Linking Families to Education Information

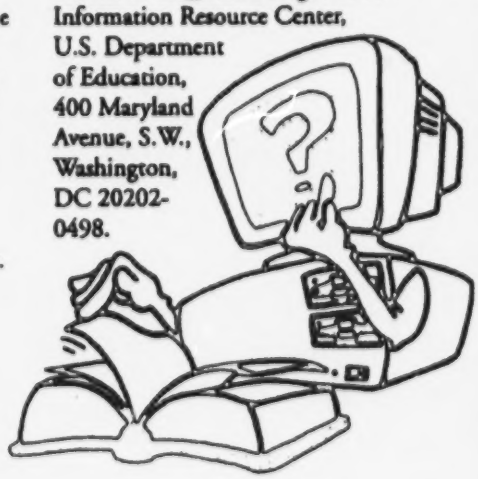
Activities for helping children learn while at home, tips for planning ahead for college, and steps toward becoming more involved in neighborhood schools are among a number of resources parents and caregivers can access through the Information Resource Center (IRC) at the U.S. Department of Education.

A central entry point into the Department, the IRC links families, schools and communities to information on student learning and provides updates on Department programs, funding opportunities, teleconferences and other events.

The IRC is staffed with specialists with expertise in various fields of education that can provide assistance or contacts for—

- programs and initiatives that center on the president and secretary's priorities,
- popular grant programs,
- free publications and materials, available directly from the Department's publication center,
- teleconferences and events, such as the monthly Satellite Town Meeting,
- referrals to additional education information and services, and
- directory assistance for finding a person or office in the Department.

The Department of Education's Information Resource Center is available Monday through Friday—9 a.m. to 5 p.m. E.T.—by calling the toll-free number 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327). The center can also be reached by visiting www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/IRC, or by sending correspondence to its e-mail address at usa_learn@ed.gov or to Information Resource Center, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-0498.



U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

Issue No. 92 | October 2001

## "We call them our 'character generation.'"

*Carole Smith of Albuquerque Public Schools on the thousands of students who have graduated from the district's character education program since 1993*

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

# Nearly $7 Million Awarded to N.Y. Students, Workers

*Funds to Support Vocational Rehabilitation and School Reconstruction Following Terrorist Attacks*

Last month U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced that the U.S. Department of Education will provide $5 million to New York state in immediate assistance from its Rehabilitation Services Administration in order to help those who have suffered disabling mental and physical injuries as a result of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. At the same time, Paige announced the details of a $1.7 million grant to New York state to meet the needs of New York school districts whose students and teachers have suffered directly as a result of the terrorist attacks.

"As we offer assistance to New Yorkers in getting back to work, we confront a great need among those who have suffered disabling injuries and emotional trauma as a direct result of the attacks," Paige said. "There are also individuals with existing physical disabilities whose support programs and services have been disrupted due to the widespread damage to downtown Manhattan. They will all need extra help in the coming months, and this substantial grant will help to meet those needs."

Among other services, the funds from the Education Department's Rehabilitation Services Administration will be used for:

- Helping individuals who have become newly disabled to return to the workforce by providing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services such as counseling, retraining, assistive technology and job placement; and
- Assisting previous and current VR consumers who may need additional support because they have lost their jobs or suffered emotional trauma as a result of the attack on the World Trade Center.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

U.S. Department of Education
COMMUNITY
UPDATE
October 2001

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ED Pubs
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794
1-877-4ED-PUBS
edpubs@inet.ed.gov

CREDITS
*Community Update* is published by the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

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*Publication info*
Education publications are printed on recycled paper.

# Study Finds Character Ed Cuts Crime

Character education can alter student attitudes towards violence and reduce youth crime, drug use and cheating, according to a massive new study by researchers from the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Conducted over the past three years, surveys of more than 7,000 youths found that after experiencing a national character development program called "CHARACTER COUNTS!" they were less likely to lie, drink alcohol, and tease others, among misdeeds reported.

According to the findings, as a result of this program the numbers of middle and high school students who say they had:

- Used physical force against another person dropped 33 percent.
- Teased someone because of race or ethnicity dropped 45 percent.
- Taken illegal drugs declined 32 percent.
- Broken into another's property dropped 50 percent.
- Taken something without paying for it fell 46 percent.
- Defaced or vandalized property fell 46 percent.
- Cheated on examinations declined 30 percent.
- Received a detention or suspension dropped 28 percent.

Researchers said the positive numbers show that the program is meeting success, but it doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement. "We've found that there still needs to be more focus on training teachers, bringing parents and community businesses into the program, bringing the program to reservation communities, and suiting the curriculum to high school students," said Rachelle Walsh-Vettern of South Dakota's Cooperative Extension Service.

The study, jointly released by the university extension service (a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture) and the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition (a consortium of education and youth-serving organizations), was funded by the South Dakota 4-H Foundation.

For detailed results, contact Karla Trautman, interim program leader, at 605-688-5131 or at AGH 152, Box 2207D, SDSU, Brookings, SD 57007. Also, visit www.abs.sdstate.edu/abs/newspkt.htm.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Of the $5 million, 86 percent will go to the New York Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities and the rest to the New York Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

The $1.7 million for New York schools is in addition to the $4 million that President Bush and Secretary Paige awarded earlier to the New York City Board of Education to support grief and trauma counseling and other services for students, families and teachers affected by the terrorist attacks in New York City. These additional funds will be directed to school districts surrounding New York City. Paige also offered grants to schools in Connecticut, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia that were impacted by the attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

In addition to offering grants and other support services to directly impacted school districts, the Education Department has developed suggestions for parents, educators and other caring adults to help them meet the needs of all children in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. These suggestions as well as links to other online resources are posted on the Department's Web site at www.ed.gov.


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# Following Franklin's Quest for Virtue

By Katherine Fraumeni Ginnetty, *Franklin, Mass.*

*Without virtue, man can have no happiness in this world.*
—Benjamin Franklin

In 1994, we—a founding coalition of parents—applied for a charter from the Massachusetts Department of Education to start up a school that would provide children with a classical academic education along with sound character development and opportunities for community service. One of the requirements on the application was to describe the education program envisioned for what we would call the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School.

We knew that the question begged an answer more profound than pure academics, and that the formation of character needed to be included in a child's elementary education. Good habits—learned in youth and practiced throughout our lives—produce traits of character universally respected and admired by parents of diverse backgrounds. How then could our new school help elementary-aged children embrace virtue?

We turned to that quintessential American, Benjamin Franklin, as a model for self-improvement. "I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues," he wrote in his autobiography. "I determined to have a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively....And like him who having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, but works on one of the beds at a time...I hoped [to see] in my pages the progress I made."

Our character education program takes Franklin's as its model and adapts it for the purpose of preparing children to become lifelong practitioners of virtue. Teachers identify each week's virtue and send information about it to parents weekly.

Our teachers seamlessly integrate the vocabulary of virtue in their regular classroom work. For example, the sixth-grade teacher whose curriculum includes ancient Rome chooses to emphasize prudence when studying the early emperors. The eighth-graders researching the scientist-of-the-week discuss fortitude when reflecting on the patience of the men and women trying to isolate a medical invention. Fourth-graders learn the meaning of courage and perseverance as they read about the great sacrifices made for liberty at Valley Forge. In kindergarten, children explore the virtues of respect, kindness and generosity through character journals and while listening to their teacher read *The Velveteen Rabbit*.

Across the grades, children are expected to set small, attainable goals and work to achieve them at home and at school. Parents are encouraged to read suggested stories that reflect the virtue under discussion, strengthening the bond between school and home. A character education committee of parents and teachers brainstorms ideas for parents, such as practicing generosity by shoveling the snow off a neighbor's wall without being asked. By sharing the same virtue vocabulary, teachers and parents are able to work together to help children recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of the virtues.

At the end of his life, Franklin was asked if he had attained perfection. He said no, but that he was a happier man than he would have been had he not made the attempt. If we are successful at the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School, every student will continue this pattern of focusing on virtue, formally or informally, long after he or she graduates from eighth grade. Practicing the virtue of optimism, we remain hopeful that our children will find happiness in virtue throughout their lives.

*Katherine Fraumeni Ginnetty and her husband Matthew are one of the five couples that founded the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School in Franklin, Mass., where she teaches part time.*

# Satellite Town Meeting

The second *Satellite Town Meeting* of the 2001–02 series focused on the most productive ways that schools can teach and reinforce core ethical values, civic virtues and democratic traditions. For a videotape of the October 16 broadcast entitled "Character Education: Teaching Respect, Responsibility and Citizenship," call the Department of Education's publication center at 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) and specify EK0397V.

The Department will continue to provide live and archived Web casts of the Satellite Town Meeting. Through a new interactive messaging feature, individuals viewing the live Web cast will now be able to send instant messages and questions for guests and the secretary. To view the show or learn more about other new program features, visit http://registerevent.ed.gov/downlink/NewServices.asp or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund, Target Stores, and Riverdeep Interactive Learning.

# Lessons

## *An Albuquerque, N.M., School Teaches the Value of Virtue*

Duranes Eleme[illegible] close 2001 with its lowest record of suspensions in the last eight years: a total of two so far for this year, down from a high of 32 in 1993 before the start of a schoolwide character education effort.

In 1994, Duranes began making changes to its discipline system—such as increasing playground supervision, rewarding students for having no demerits, and scheduling a "Code of Conduct" assembly each trimester—based on the core values of an initiative called "CHARACTER COUNTS!"

"I have to think," said Duranes' principal Gabe Garcia, "that when our kindergartners from 1994 became our fifth-graders from 1999, implementation of the character program had to be the most significant variable that caused improvement in student behavior. Good behavior had become the norm and misbehavior the exception."

CHARACTER COUNTS! is a national coalition of schools, communities and nonprofit organizations working together to strengthen six ethical traits in youth: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. It asserts that these fundamental values transcend political, religious and cultural differences. In other words, a consensus remains that honesty is superior to lying, fairness to greed, and caring to callousness.

The project promises more than the marketing and memorization of labels. "It's a culture change," said national director Julie Dwyer. "If everything is integrated using that consistent language, those consistent expectations, it effects a substantive and consistent change. That doesn't mean that a school community doesn't have problems. It just changes the way in which they're handled and how much they happen."

CHARACTER COUNTS! has greatly expanded in the state of New Mexico, particularly in Albuquerque where Duranes is located. The city's school system integrated the character education framework in all of its classrooms, following the initial success in fall 1993 of one of its schools, where official reprimands dropped from 64 to 17 in just a few months after introducing the program.

"We call them our 'character generation,'" said Carole Smith, local coordinator for Albuquerque Public Schools, referring to the district's 85,000 students, many of whom graduated from the character education program over the past seven years. The school system administers multi-day training seminars for its educators on teaching techniques.

Appealing to each stakeholder—from parents to business partners—the "Six Pillars of Character" have become a springboard for local efforts because "they give us all something to believe in," Garcia explained.

He and teachers rewrote Duranes' school codes around the language of the pillars. For instance, the "No use of put downs or verbal abuse" rule once admonished students; the new rule, "We will show respect," instead encourages positive behavior. The school also added the two values of courtesy and good attention as part of its common vocabulary.

Teacher Cris Montaño said he took the framework to another level at Duranes by coordinating a leadership academy for fifth-grade students last year. He had been looking for something to address low test scores and the needs of Duranes' disadvantaged Hispanic population. Montaño, who also serves as assistant principal, believes the set of values defined by CHARACTER COUNTS! builds effective leaders and serves as a motivator amid the inner-city challenges of gangs and drugs.

"Many times these kids are treated unfairly because of where they live, because of their name, because of their skin color. So fairness is something that they need to look up to, that not only other people must respect about them but also that they need to exercise with others. Everybody wants an equal chance," he said. Then, reflecting, he added, "I love that word 'fairness.' That's a word that children can relate to. It's not too adult."

As Duranes focuses this month on "citizenship," Montaño said America's

# Character in

BY NICOLE ASHBY

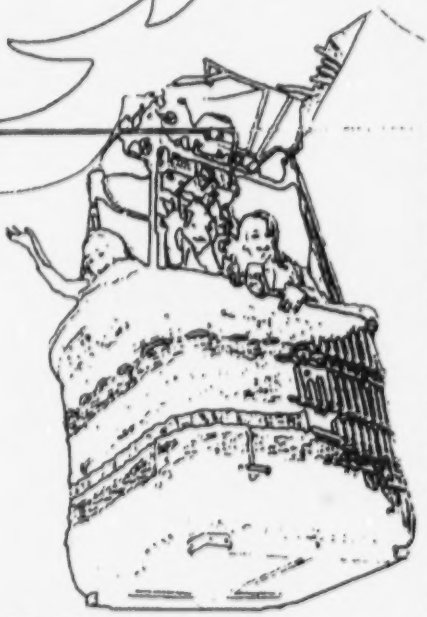
response to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 has helped the students appreciate even more deeply the values of being a member of a community, as well as caring and responsibility. He said that the impact has resonated all the way to Albuquerque, where "a trust was realized and established once again with the police and firefighters within our own community."

Montaño also wanted a more challenging curriculum that would help his students to become both smart and good. The usual reading outline was supplemented with selections by Aristotle and Socrates. *The Book of Virtues* by former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett became the academy's central text.

The pillars even have a place in mathematics class. A lesson on the counting methods of Mayan settlers leads to a discussion on responsibility and citizenship. In their computations in Entrepreneurial Math, students also examine fairness in the marketplace and what it means to be ethically bound to business practices.

The results have been immediate in the performance of class president Itzel Perez, who said she used to receive a lot of Fs last year in fourth grade but is now earning all As and Bs. Itzel said, in Spanish, her favorite value is "cariño" (*affection*) because "I care a lot about other people."

Exercising character has become the spirit of the classroom, fostering a safe environment for learning. "What's really neat," said Montaño, "is going into a classroom where there's trustworthiness, leaving things out on your table that you know will be there when you come back—your calculator, ruler, Palm Pilot, laptop. Or someone finds a dollar and brings it to the office—that's true character."



*Cheri (far right) and classmates were rewarded with a balloon ride for their model behavior.*

Every school staff member takes part in the character education effort as both models and motivators of good behavior. For instance, a cafeteria worker awarded fifth-grader Cheri Zubia a "gold slip" for helping a child who did not have lunch money. When asked if she thought the six virtues are hard to practice, Cheri responded, "It depends if you're a good person or not." She then explained that people aren't born to be good, they have to learn how.

Cheri's mother, Jacquelyn Ayala, who volunteers as a "classroom mom," pointed out the importance of extending character education from the home to the school. "As a parent, you can't always be there so I think that whoever has your child should have some guidelines," she said. Ayala boasted that in the four years she has spent at Duranes she has never witnessed a playground fight, for which she credits the school's character program.

Because of the high expectations of the academy, not one fifth-grader has received a pink slip for a school violation this year. On the contrary, academy students are required to earn three gold slips each week for performing service that goes beyond what is expected of them, such as helping a student in reading or helping the janitor set up the gym.

The character model has also influenced the lower grades. First-grade teacher Jean Chadwick said common misbehavior among young children, such as name calling, is examined in light of the six pillars.

Although she initially mistook the effort for an add-on feature, Chadwick quickly recognized how integral the values promoted through the project are to academic behavior. "If someone falls down, they're not laughing at them but seeing if the person is okay. And that makes the kids feel secure," she said. "If somebody's laughing at you because you've fallen and hurt yourself, learning is the last thing you want to do."

For more information about CHARACTER COUNTS! in Albuquerque Public Schools, contact coordinator Carole Smith at 505-848-8882. To learn more about the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, call the national office at 1-800-711-2670.



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PARTNERSHIP
*for Family Involvement in Education*

***A coalition of more than 7,200 education, community, religious and business organizations nationwide. To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit http://pfie.ed.gov.***

# Developing Character Through Financial Literacy

"I believe that education is the ultimate poverty eradication tool of the 21st century. If we believe in our youth and their future, we have to give them something more than our love and best wishes. We must provide them with the information and knowledge they need to prepare for the economic realities of personal finance. Being poor is a state of mind," said John Bryant, chairman and CEO of Operation HOPE, Inc. (OHI). A member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, OHI is a unique non-profit investment banking organization that provides economic education for underserved populations.

OHI's national initiative, Banking on Our Future (BOOF), acts as a catalyst for empowerment by exposing inner city youths to their potential financial futures, and encourages parents, teachers, governments, communities and employers to lead by example and work with youths to enact comprehensive change in their behavior. BOOF teaches underserved youths in cities throughout this country the basics of checking and savings accounts, and the importance of credit and investment in their young lives.

"BOOF is not just about dollars and cents. It's about building hope, character and belief in oneself, from the perspective of something we all understand and relate to: money!" explained Bryant. In addition to receiving an economics education, youths are inspired to never give up on their dreams and set no limits on what they can accomplish. Youths gain a message of empowerment, a message of responsibility, and most important, a message of hope.

*A volunteer banker-teacher speaks about financial responsibility to students in the Banking on Our Future program at Inglewood High School in California.*

Since 1996, over 75,000 youths have been empowered with "life skills" to manage their day-to-day financial transactions, plan for their future and survive in a global economy. This mission is accomplished by taking trained volunteer bankers-teachers into schools and into community and faith-based organizations in underserved communities who share this message and inspire youths to take control of their financial futures. Over 600 bankers-teachers have worked in partnership with 300 schools and community organizations nationwide to promote financial literacy to youth.

For more information about the BOOF program, visit www.operationhope.org, or contact Mary Hagerty, senior vice president, at 213-891-2908 or Mary.Hagerty@operationhope.org.

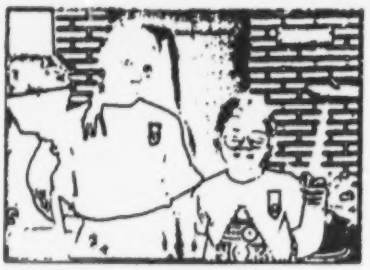
# ABOUT our PARTNERS

*A Roundup of Recent Activities*

The **United States Tennis Association** (USTA), through its community-driven program "USA Tennis NJTL," seeks to develop the character of young people through sport. Co-founded by Arthur Ashe, USA Tennis NJTL emphasizes the ideals and life of the late athlete by reaching out to those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to play tennis; instilling in children the values of sportsmanship, leadership and academic excellence; and providing tennis skill development and team play. Since 1969, nearly 200,000 youngsters have participated in USA Tennis NJTL at neighborhood sites throughout the country. The program offers opportunities beyond the game of tennis that include regional rallies, college scholarships, the Arthur Ashe Essay Contest, and an all-expense paid trip to the Invitational Tennis Leadership Camp in Tampa, Fla. For more information, call 914-696-7000 or visit www.usta.com.

**The Communitarian Network** (TCN), in cooperation with the White House and U.S. Department of Education, is advancing a unique concept for making character education a total school effort. "Extracurricular activities, especially sports, should not be considered 'extra' but a vital part of education," says founder Amitai Etzioni, a George Washington University professor. The network believes that sports can be a tool for improving students' character by teaching young people to play by the rules, respect authority, and deal maturely with defeat. TCN's research also shows that children involved in community service have significantly lower rates of confrontation with the law and are less likely to use drugs. TCN studies ways in which character education can be promoted through peer mentoring, family and community involvement, and activities both inside and outside of the classroom. For more information, call 1-800-245-7460 or 202-994-8190, or visit www.gwu.edu/~ccps.

**Girl Scouts USA** (GSUSA) has inspired the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service for girls ages 5–17 for almost 90 years. Girls in more than 233,000 troops nationwide participate in its character education activities. At the Cahaba Girl Scout Council in Birmingham, Ala., for example, nearly 13,000 girls recently served as peer mentors to local foster children, provided food pantry support, and worked with local chapters of Habitat for Humanity and the American Red Cross. Famous for its cookie sales program, GSUSA encourages its members to work as a team toward a common goal. Each year, GSUSA awards the Young Women of Distinction honor to a dozen scouts who have demonstrated the highest achievement in projects that illustrate responsibility, stewardship of resources, diversity, good citizenship and honesty. For more information, call 1-800-478-7248 or visit www.girlscouts.org.



*Girl Scouts make a difference by participating in local community service projects.*

## CALENDAR

**November 1**, Chicago, Ill. *Illinois Fatherhood Initiative Conference: "Fathers as Educators and Educating Fathers."* Call 1-800-996-DADS (1-800-996-3237) or visit www.4fathers.org.

**November 1–2**, Brussels, Belgium. *The Communitarian Network's "Diversity Within Unity" Conference.* Call 1-800-245-7460 or 202-994-8190, or visit www.gwu.edu/~ccps.

**November 13–15**, Reno, Nev. Second in a series of fall conferences on *Improving America's Schools*, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education will hold a Families Engaged in Student Learning Institute on day two of each conference. The series concludes Dec. 17–19 in San Antonio, Texas. Call 1-800-203-5494. Also, visit www.ncbe.gwu.edu/iasconferences or e-mail ias_conferences@ed.gov.

**November 17–20**, Charleston, S.C. *National Community Education Association's Annual Conference.* Call 703-359-8973 or visit www.ncea.com.

**November 30–December 2**, San Diego, Calif. *Zero to Three's Sixteenth National Training Institute.* Call 202-624-1760 or visit www.zerotothree.org.

*While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources, and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*



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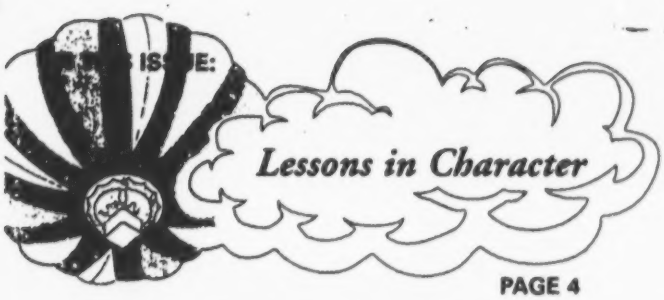


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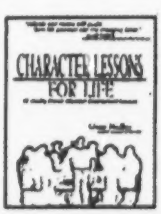
# Teaching Lessons of Character and Values

Across the nation, schools and communities are working to ensure children learn values such as respect, responsibility and good citizenship as they learn traditional subjects such as reading, math and science. Studies show schools integrating character education in their classrooms are witnessing fewer disciplinary referrals, improved school attendance and fewer dropouts, which all contribute to a safer environment for learning. A number of organizations offer educators resources for developing character education programs, including the following:

The **Character Education Partnership** (CEP), a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals, points out in its "Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education" that "the school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort." Each year, CEP highlights promising practices by schools and districts across the country that excel in these principles. This year's selections have been compiled into the publication *2001 National Schools of Character*. For more information, call 1-800-988-8081 or visit www.character.org.




Equipping schools and families with solutions for building character, the **National Character Education Center** offers two online resources: a free monthly newsletter entitled *Values in Action! The Best Ethics in Education*, and an extensive search engine of practical strategies. In addition, the center just released *Character Lessons for Life*, a 52-lesson plan for teaching teenagers about respect and responsibility. For more information, call 949-888-2670 or visit www.ethicsusa.com.

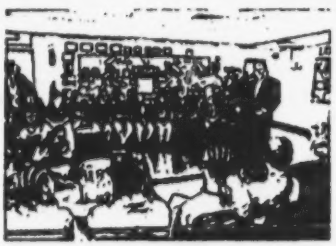
The **Center for Civic Education** administers a wide range of K–12 programs that foster values fundamental to American constitutional democracy. Among them, the "We the People..." programs, which focus on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, encourage students to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens. For more information, call 1-800-350-4223 or visit www.civiced.org.

U.S. Department of Education

# COMMUNITY

Issue Number 93 | UPDATE | December 2001





" November/December

"Some say it is unfair to hold disadvantaged children to rigorous standards. I say it is discrimination to require anything less."

President George W. Bush "

Full Story

**THIS MONTH'S FOCUS: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

## Inside Update...


- Leaving No Child Behind, A Letter from Secretary Paige
  As this issue of Community Update goes to press, Congress is nearing completion of landmark school improvement legislation based on President George W. Bush's blueprint for education reform, entitled No Child Left Behind. This article explains what the president's plan will mean to communities.
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- Recent Resources on Reforming Education




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The U.S. Department of Education has developed a number of resources that explain the education reforms on the horizon for all of America's schools.

- Credits

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Last updated—October 23, 2001 (lvb)

# Leaving No Child Behind, A Letter from Secretary Paige

*As this issue of Community Update goes to press, Congress is nearing completion of landmark school improvement legislation based on President George W. Bush's blueprint for education reform, entitled No Child Left Behind. The sweeping changes embodied in the new law are based on "four pillars," which, briefly stated, would...*

***Increase accountability for student performance:*** *States, districts and schools that improve achievement will be rewarded; failure will require intervention. Parents will know how well their child is learning, and that schools are held accountable for their effectiveness with annual state reading and math assessments in grades 3-8.*

***Focus on what works:*** *Federal dollars will be spent on effective, research-based programs and practices. Funds will be targeted to improve schools and enhance teacher quality.*

***Reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility:*** *Additional flexibility will be provided to states and school districts, and flexible funding will be increased at the local level.*

***Empower parents:*** *Parents will have more information about the quality of their child's school. Students in persistently low-performing schools will be given more options.*

*The following article, with a letter from U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, and its accompanying sidebars explain what No Child Left Behind will mean to communities.*

Dear Partners,

In 1965, Congress created a role for the federal government in education. Among other things, that role committed the government to helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive a quality education and gain access to a bright future. Many years and good intentions later, we still have not fulfilled that promise.

While states and school districts still bear the lion's share of responsibility for educating our children, President Bush and I are working with Congress to ensure that the federal role advances the kind of reform that improves our education system. A key component of that reform is local control and flexibility. You and your neighbors know what your local schools need better than anyone in Washington; and we want you, through your state and local officials, to make those decisions.

Improving education, however, will require more than just state officials, school boards and school superintendents. Our communities will play an important role in providing oversight, ideas and accountability. The following message explains the shape of things to come and shows you some of the resources you can use to make sure no child is left behind.

*Rod Paige*

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# Leaving No Child Behind

Introduction

Our education system faces one of the toughest challenges any complex organization has ever had to face. For the first time in our nation's history, we are asking schools and teachers to educate all children to meet high standards. This is no simple task. Although many of our nation's schools are excellent, those that are not are leaving too many children behind.

Happily, there are people in our communities who know how to transform complex organizations to achieve higher performance: namely, our business and civic leaders.

President Bush's plan, *No Child Left Behind*, is based on many of the same principles that have renewed American business over the past two decades. At the heart of the president's plan is a promise to raise standards for all children. Since we cannot know if we are meeting those standards unless we measure performance, President Bush is committed to annual assessments of student learning in the basic subjects of reading and math. The information from these tests will allow us to identify and reward schools that are making progress and to intervene in schools that are not. Finally, President Bush is committed to doing what works, especially when it comes to teaching young children how to read.

In sum, this plan--in partnership with parents, communities, school leadership and classroom teachers--will ensure that every child in America receives a great education and that no child is left behind.

The following guide will show you--

- What high standards mean and do
- What to look for in test scores
- How communities can hold schools accountable for results
- How to improve reading instruction and
- Where to turn for more information on how to get involved

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# Leaving No Child Behind . . .

Raising Standards, Lifting Children

Every child in America deserves an excellent education. In order to strengthen the culture that binds our nation together, renew the democracy that empowers us all, and ensure that everyone enjoys the bounty of a strong economy, we must challenge all our children to read well, do difficult math, learn history, and understand science.

Under President Bush's plan, states will set challenging standards in the core subjects of reading and math. Well-crafted standards must explain in plain language exactly what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. They must set clear expectations so that teachers, parents and communities can all understand what should take place in the classroom.

We know from business practices that if we want to boost performance, we must set clear, measurable goals and align our systems to them. In education, academic standards are the foundation of a performance-based system. High standards do not just help teachers; they also encourage children, because children tend to perform to meet the expectations of adults. If these expectations are low, children can miss their true potential. When expectations are high, progress can be amazing.

Read your state's education standards for any grade level. Think about them in the context of your local economy and the direction you want it to take. Do the standards seem rigorous enough? If not, tell the people who set them or help to set new ones. Public standards need input from business leaders, civic leaders and parents--not just education professionals. Engage in a conversation about standards and do something to understand and shape them.

Annual Testing: Learning What Works

Creating clear and rigorous academic standards is an important first step in improving our schools. We will never know, however, if we are reaching those standards unless we measure student performance.

Tests have been around as long as schools have. What is new about today's tests is that they are much more sophisticated in their capacity to diagnose problem areas in student achievement.

The medical field provides a good analogy. For years, doctors used X-rays to diagnose broken bones and other ailments. They worked fine much of the time. But then came the MRI, a much more powerful diagnostic tool. Suddenly, doctors could identify a whole host of illnesses at much earlier stages and make better recommendations for courses of treatment.

In much the same way, today's state-of-the-art tests can help educators identify the specific learning problems that each student is experiencing. Because these tests are directly linked to academic standards--a very important change from the past--we can find out quickly and accurately whether students are learning what they need to learn. These new tests do not simply measure basic skills; they measure important content knowledge too.

People complain that testing causes schools to emphasize "teaching to the test." Each

state, however, must design tests that match what children are expected to learn. That means " teaching to the test" is really teaching those things we have already decided every child should know and be able to do.

A good testing system that takes test data and breaks it down by student and classroom, as well as by school and by school district, can empower teachers to tailor their instruction to each student's needs. With tests aligned to state standards, the testing system can be designed to identify and then help the children who are in danger of being left behind.

Looking at Progress

Another benefit of annual testing is that it allows us to identify successful schools. Surprisingly often, two schools in the same neighborhood produce varying results. Students in one school excel, while those in the other stagnate. Testing brings these differences to light. It shows us the strengths of a successful school, which can be used as a model elsewhere, and tells us where and how to intervene in the failing school. Children who have a bad teaching experience take years to catch up. It is better to intervene early. That's why *No Child Left Behind* calls for annual testing in grades three through eight. This will permit the early identification of problems and allow rapid corrective action.

When you invest in a business, you demand a rigorous, objective account of its performance; and you also demand that its performance be excellent. When you invest your taxes in a school, where children's futures are at stake, you should demand nothing less. Take action--and demand positive results.

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# Leaving No Child Behind . . .

Accountability

Academic standards and annual tests give communities a wealth of information that can and should prompt them to make important decisions. After several years of testing, clear pictures tend to emerge about the performance of the system and of individual schools. The data on student achievement serve as education's "bottom line."

Once communities have this information, they must use it. Commend the best schools and replicate their best practices. Identify and intervene in struggling schools. If schools persist in failure, use test data to build the case for change, such as the replacement of the principal or teaching staff or some other form of reorganization. Demand improvement. Decline excuses.

In President Bush's plan, low-performing schools will be identified and given extra help. If they do not improve after several years, then states and districts must take action, or parents will be given federal assistance to send their children to a different and better public school or to pay for private tutoring.

The most dangerous thing you can do for your community is to assume that "the experts" are running the schools just fine. If they are not giving good answers to your questions--or if you and your peers are not asking any questions--the children of your community are missing the opportunity to reach their full potential. People who struggle to acquire as adults the education they should have received as children display admirable tenacity--but they will tell you that they would have preferred to get it right the first time. For today's children, it is not too late to get it right, if you take action now.

Doing What Works: Evidence-Based Reading Instruction

Teaching children to read is the most important thing our schools do. Yet, for too long, schools have been embroiled in bitter debates about how to teach this most basic skill. Thankfully, in recent years, scientists have evaluated good reading instruction and curricula and determined the best way to teach reading skills effectively to young children. The researchers tell us that 95 percent of all children will learn to read if they are taught using:

· Systematic and explicit instruction in phonics, decoding, comprehension and literature appreciation
· Daily exposure to a variety of texts, both fiction and nonfiction, as well as incentives to read independently and with others
· Vocabulary instruction that emphasizes the relationships among words and among word structure, origin and meaning
· Instruction in comprehension that includes predicting outcomes, summarizing, clarifying, questioning and visualizing
· Frequent opportunities to write

These guidelines have proved effective in even the toughest of classrooms. Many classrooms filled with children considered "difficult to educate" are doing an excellent job, so we know it can be done. President Bush is committed to making sure all elementary school teachers have solid training in these reading guidelines, which is why he has proposed his Reading First initiative. Now that we know what works, we must do what works.

As part of your school system's most important constituency, you should consider calling your local school district or a nearby elementary school to find out if its reading instruction programs employ these proven practices.

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# Making Education Reform a Reality

**Making Education Reform a Reality**

Interested in learning more about improving your child's education? Visit the **U.S. Department of Education's Web site** at www.ed.gov for resources plus links to other organizations, or call the Department's Information Resource Center at 1-800-USA-LEARN. Below is a sample of organizations that provide research and information on best practices for making reform a reality in local schools:

The ***No Child Left Behind*** home page (www.ed.gov/inits/ncib) offers the complete text of President Bush's blueprint for educating every child in America to his or her full potential, plus updates.

The ***National Reading Panel*** (www.nationalreadingpanel.org) produces objective reports about what works and what doesn't in reading.

The **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development** (www.nichd.nih.gov) offers health and education information for parents.

***Achieve, Inc.*** (www.achieve.org) helps raise academic standards, measure performance against those standards, and establish clear accountability for results.

***Just for the Kids*** (www.just4kids.org) uses state accountability data to examine and improve school performance, and offers tools and instruction to help others replicate educational best practices.

The ***Partnership for Family Involvement in Education*** (www.pfie.ed.gov) offers tips for getting involved in local schools.

*For print resources on education reform, call the Education Department?s Publications Center at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.*

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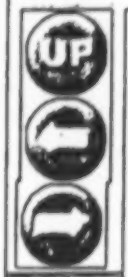
# New Center to Support Use of Performance Data



**New Center to Support Use of Performance Data**

*Effort Can Be a "Powerful Force for Change," Paige Says*

A distinguished coalition of educators, businesspersons and policymakers have announced the establishment of the National Center for Educational Accountability, a collaborative effort to improve learning through the effective use of school and student data and the identification of best practices.

The National Center for Educational Accountability is a joint venture of Just for the Kids, an Austin, Texas-based nonprofit organization that uses state accountability data to examine and improve school performance; the University of Texas at Austin; and the Education Commission of the States (ECS), an interstate compact that helps state policymakers shape education policies. The collaboration unites a proven model with the research strengths of a major university and the leadership and policy expertise of a prestigious organization in a joint effort to elevate the quality of public education in this country.

"I can tell you there is no more powerful force for change than families and communities armed with information," said U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige at the Nov. 8, 2001, news conference announcing the new center. "President Bush built his No Child Left Behind plan on commonsense principles --including state standards, assessments aligned with those standards, and public reporting of test data on student performance."

Also taking part in the announcement were former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley; Ted Sanders, president of the Education Commission of the States; Larry Faulkner, president of the University of Texas; and Barbara Byrd-Bennett, chief executive officer of the Cleveland Municipal School District.

The National Center for Educational Accountability will build on the model of the successful Just for the Kids program begun in Austin in 1995 by attorney and civic leader Tom Luce, who will chair the center's board of directors. After years of research and working with educators, Just for the Kids developed an Internet-based school information system to drive improvement in public schools. The keystone for the program's efforts is academic performance data-facts about student performance that provide an effective tool for identifying areas of improvement and low performance.

"Coordinating the school improvement efforts of Just for the Kids, the University of Texas at Austin and the Education Commission of the States will take a significant step toward raising academic standards across the country," Luce said. "This partnership will expand the knowledge of educators, policymakers and the public about how to use school and student information to identify educational best practices. Just for the Kids is very pleased to be part of this historic effort to improve student achievement."

As its Texas mentor program has done, the National Center for Educational Accountability will marry the science of data analysis with the human element of classroom interaction to identify classroom successes, develop cutting-edge educational resources, and build policy models that will be made available to education leaders nationwide. The center employees and associates will go into the schools, talk with

teachers and administrators about their challenges, and observe firsthand the daily instructional strategies and leadership practices that have garnered success.

"The National Center for Educational Accountability Board of Directors is a roll call of nearly two dozen of the nation's most accomplished business leaders and policymakers, many of whom have departed the halls of commerce and government to make education improvement their life's work," said Luce. "They are men and women who share the conviction that attaining the highest degree of excellence in public education is the single most consequential factor in America's future."

"In an era when educators and education policymakers are sharply focused on accountability, it is imperative that we take full-length, motion-picture looks at student achievement to improve teaching and learning," said Ted Sanders, ECS president. "Taking snapshot glances doesn't help us learn what brings about success. This joint venture among the University of Texas at Austin, Just for the Kids and the Education Commission of the States brings together three entities that can have a tremendous impact on improving education for all of our nation's children."

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# Recent Resources on Reforming Education

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a number of resources that explain the education reforms on the horizon for all of America's schools and what each stakeholder can do to help every child reach his or her potential. Below in parentheses is the identification number for ordering these resources through the Department's publications center, along with the Web address for downloading an electronic copy.

**About "No Child Left Behind"**

**Back to School, Moving Forward** outlines the role each American can play in making reform a reality in local schools. A series of three brochures describe what No Child Left Behind means for educators (EA0186B), families* (hardcopy not available), and communities (EA0182P). An excerpt of the version for communities appears in this issue. www.ed.gov/inits/backtoschool

The November 2001 edition of the Satellite Town Meeting-the Department of Education's monthly television program-prepares parents for the legislative changes and reforms that will follow the president's education plan. A videotape of this hour-long broadcast, "What No Child Left Behind Means for Parents," is available on both VHS* (EK0401V) and three-quarter inch tape* (EK0402V).

**About Reading**

**Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read** (EXR0007B) focuses on the critical years of kindergarten through third grade, when children learn to read. The 58-page booklet, designed especially for educators, identifies methods that have proven to lead to reading success, such as instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text prehension. .nifl.gov/nifl/partnershipforreading/publications/PFRbooklet.pdf

**Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read** (EXR0006H) guides parents of children in preschool through third grade in activities that help build critical early skills for reading. This brochure provides tips for introducing children to language, such as pointing out letters on boxes, and encourages a daily time for reading.

***How Do I Know a Good Early Reading Program When I See One?*** (EA0177F) is a one-page flyer that lists the characteristics and qualities of an effective early reading program, for example, a classroom library that offers many books for varying skill levels and reading instruction that lasts 90 minutes for the primary grades. www.ed.gov/inits/rrrl/guide.html

The ***Ready to Read, Ready to Learn*** Web site--www.ed.gov/inits/rrrl/index.html--details First Lady Laura Bush's education initiatives, which include a project for drawing high-quality teachers to impoverished schools.

**About Partnerships**

***Who We Are and What We Do: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education*** (EK0391P) highlights the activities of thousands of partner organizations that are encouraging family involvement in education. The booklet also includes membership

information and an executive summary on the federal role in the No Child Left Behind plan. www.pfie.ed.gov

The ***Proud Partner*** poster (EK0424R) is a banner for organizations working together so no child is left behind.

The ***Reading Tips for Parents**** (EKH0051P) booklet provides simple strategies for creating strong readers and identifies the five essential components of reading. www.pfie.ed.gov

For a free hardcopy of these publications, while supplies last, contact ED Pubs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS or at www.ed.gov/about/ordering.jsp. As indicated (with an asterisk), a number of these resources are available in Spanish but may be filed under another identification number. For more information on the No Child Left Behind agenda, call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

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# Credits

Community Update is published by the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.

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